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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Pilot is not to be blamed for AI plane crash: SC tells father

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday said no one blamed the chief pilot of the Air India Dreamliner for the 12 June crash which claimed 260 lives, and asked his 91-year-old father not to carry any emotional burden.

"There is no insinuation against him even in the preliminary report," a bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said.

The top court also issued notice to the Centre and the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Pushkaraj Sabharwal, the father of deceased pilot Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, and the Federation of Indian Pilots have moved the Supreme Court requesting a court-monitored inquiry headed by a former apex court judge into the crash.

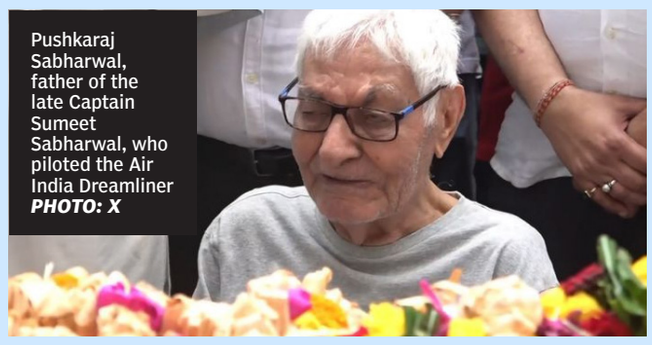
"First of all, it was an unfortunate plane crash and secondly, you should not carry a burden on yourself that your son is being blamed. The pilot is not to be blamed for the plane crash. It was an accident," the bench told senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for Pushkaraj.

Sankaranarayanan said it started after US publication Wall Street Journal put out a news report claiming that pilot errors caused the plane crash.

The bench said, "It was a nasty reporting only to blame India. We are not bothered by foreign media reports. No one in the country believes that it was the fault of the pilot."

Justice Bagchi said the investigation into the accident was conducted according to the process.

"If you challenge the investigation, you have to challenge the statutory provisions of the (Aircraft) Act itself," the judge said. *—PTI*



Pushkaraj Sabharwal, father of the late Captain Sumeet Sabharwal, who piloted the Air India Dreamliner *PHOTO: X*

Farmers accept CM's offer, call off stir

Minister MB Patil, DyCM DK Shivakumar CM Siddaramaiah& Ministers HK Patil, Satish Jarkiholi meeting farmers in the City *PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD*

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

- CM said that the govt will fix the price of sugarcane at Rs 3,300 per tonne, with mills paying Rs 50 and the State paying Rs 50, beyond what it initially proposed

The Karnataka government has decided to fix the price Rs 3,300 per tonne of sugarcane, yielding a recovery of 11.25 per cent, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said after meeting protesting farmers. Farmer bodies then agreed to call off the protests.

The farmers' protest entered its ninth day at Gurlapur Cross in Mudalagi taluk of Belagavi district on Friday. They began their protest demanding a procurement price of Rs 3,500 per tonne of sugarcane. The movement has also spread across various parts of north Karnataka.

"The Deputy Commissioner (DC) and Superintendent of Police (SP) of Belagavi district had offered Rs 3,100 per tonne of sugarcane yielding a recovery of 10.25 per cent, and Rs 3,200 per tonne for recovery of 11.25 per cent," Siddaramaiah said. "As protests continued despite this, we (will) pay Rs 50 from factory owners side and Rs 50 from the government. That means to say Rs 100 in total will be paid in addition to what DC had offered to the farmers per metric tonne."

Violence had erupted at various locations. At Hattargi, near Belagavi, the agitation took a more aggressive turn as farmers blocked the Pune–Bengaluru National Highway. The protesters parked tractors on the highway, causing severe traffic disruption, with long queues of vehicles. A stone pelting incident also injured six police personnel.

—Salar News with Agencies

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Remove stray dogs, cattle from public spaces, says SC

Court wants them moved to shelter homes amid 'alarming rise' in dog bite cases

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday took note of the "alarming rise" in dog bite incidents in institutional areas like educational centres, hospitals, bus stands and railway stations. The apex court directed authorities to move canines to designated shelters.

The apex court also ordered the authorities, including the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), to ensure the removal of stray animals and cattle from highways and expressways.

A three-judge special bench comprising Justices Vikram Nath, Sandeep Mehta and NV Anjaria passed a slew of directions.

"... (With) regard to the alarming rise in incidents of dog bites within institutional areas, such as educational institutions, hospitals, sports complexes, bus stands and depots and railway stations, this court deems it appropriate to issue the following directions in the interest of public safety, health and management of stray dogs," the bench said.

It directed states and Union territories to identify such institutions within two weeks.

"It shall be the responsibility of the jurisdictional municipal body or authority to forthwith remove every stray dog found within the premises of an educational institution and other institutions... to a designated shelter after due sterilisation and vaccination in accordance with the Animal Birth Control Rules," it said.

Stray dogs shouldn't be released to the place from where they were picked up.

PHOTO: PIXABAY

KEY DIRECTIVES

- Authorities must identify institutions to clear dogs from in 2 weeks.
- Clearing should be done in 8 weeks.
- National Highway authority should remove stray animals & deploy patrol teams
- Municipal & panchayat authorities to inspect at least once every 3 months.

It said this exercise should be completed as soon as possible, and preferably within eight weeks.

The bench said the stray dogs shall not be released back to the same place from where they were picked up.

"We have consciously directed the non-release of such stray dogs to the same location from which they were picked up, as permitting the same would frustrate the very impact of the directions issued to liberate such institutional areas from the presence of stray dogs," it said.

It directed the authorities to constitute dedicated highway patrol teams for continuous surveillance and immediate response to reports of stray cattle or other animals obstructing the roadways. A helpline should also be linked to these teams.

The fixed the matter for further hearing on 13 January.

The apex court was hearing a suo motu case, initiated on 28 July over a media report on stray dog bites leading to rabies in New Delhi. *—PTI*

TRUMP TO VISIT INDIA IN 2026

NEW YORK, 7 NOV

US President Donald Trump said he could travel to India next year, emphasising that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi "wants" him to visit while calling him a "great man" and a friend. Trump claimed that India has substantially reduced buying from Russia, which opened the doors to his diplomacy.

India will host leaders from Australia, Japan, and the US for the Quad summit in New Delhi after the 2024 summit was held in Wilmington, Delaware. However, the dates for summit are yet to be announced.

Trump imposed 25 per cent reciprocal tariffs on India and an additional 25 per cent levies for Delhi's purchases of Russian oil, bringing the total duties imposed on India to 50 per cent. India had described the action as "unfair, unjustified and unreasonable."

Trump has also repeatedly claimed that Washington intervened to solve India and Pakistan's stand-off after the Pahalgam terror. India has consistently denied third-party intervention. *—PTI*

'Cong dropped Vande Mataram verses'

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, during the inauguration of the year-long commemoration of 'Vande Mataram' on 7 November, claimed that significant stanzas of the national song were dropped in 1937, an act he associates with sowing the seeds of partition. He accused the Congress party of truncating 'Vande Mataram' under Jawaharlal Nehru's leadership.

Addressing attendees at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium, he highlighted that this "divisive mindset" remains a contemporary challenge. Modi stated, "'Vande Mataram' became the voice of India's freedom struggle... Unfortunately, in 1937, important stanzas... were separated... Today's generation needs to know why this injustice was done."

Modi called 'Vande Mataram' a vision of a prosperous India and an embodiment of the nation's spirit, urging unity and progress based on knowledge and innovation. The commemorative event marks 150 years since the song's inception by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. *—PTI*

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WOMAN WITH BRAZILIAN'S PIC ON VOTER LIST DIED IN '22

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

A dead woman's name was used with a Brazilian model's photo in the Haryana voter list, India Today reported. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had alleged that the photo of Brazilian model, later identified as Larissa Nery, had appeared on 22 different voter IDs during the 2024 Haryana Assembly elections.

Guniya died in 2022, her husband said as per India Today, but her name was still in the voter roll.

The Brazilian woman was named Guniya, the woman on the right

"Our daughter-in-law died two years ago. It is surprising that her name is still in the voter list. But we do not know how the picture of a foreign woman got there," said Guniya's mother-in-law. She also showed her daughter-in-law's death certificate to the media.

At a press conference on Wednesday, Rahul Gandhi had raised serious questions about the functioning of the Election Commission, saying that the same picture of a Brazilian model was used 22 times under the names "Seema", "Sweetie" and "Saraswati". *—Agencies*

>>>More on Page 3

3RD DEATH IN A MONTH

Tiger kills farmer in Mysuru; safaris suspended

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

A farmer was killed in a tiger attack in Mysuru district on Friday, prompting Karnataka Forest Minister Eshwar Khandre to order the suspension of safari operations in Nagarahole and Bandipur Tiger Reserves. He also halted trekking activities in areas prone to human-wildlife conflict. This is the third such death in the region in the last one month.

He also directed that forest staff in safari operations be deployed to capture the tiger.

Chowdayya Nayak, 35, was killed around 9am at Hale Heggudilu village in Saragur taluk of Mysuru district, officials said. This was followed by a violent protest by angry villagers. Villagers lashed out at officials who rushed to the spot, condemning their failure to prevent human animal conflict and wild animals damaging their crops.

PHOTO: WWW.NAGARAHOLENATIONALPARKONLINE.IN/

The tiger was hiding in a bush when it attacked Nayak, who was tilling the land with his oxen.

He is survived by his wife Rukmini and three daughters.

Sources said the government is likely to replace Bandipur Director Prabhakaran with IFS officer Santosh Kumar. Kumar had earlier served as BRT Tiger Reserve director and dealt with the poisoning of four tiger cubs and their mother at MM Hills Wildlife Sanctuary.

Khandre said the loss of three lives along the Bandipur-Nagarahole forest belt in Mysuru and Chamarajanagara districts in a month was "deeply distressing".

All officials, vehicle drivers and staff currently assigned to safari duties are to be deployed for the tiger capture operation. The Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) and the Director of Project Tiger have also been instructed to camp on site to capture the tiger.

Following the incident, BJP State President BY Vijayendra slammed the government alleging that the ruling party in the state was mired in internal squabbles, completely sidelining farmers.

The other two recent victims of tiger attacks were Rajshekhar of Bannegere and Doddaningaiah of Kurnegala. One Maha Devegowda of Badagalapura of Saragur lost his eyes to a tiger attack last month in the same taluk. *—Salar News*

Deceased was attacked by an jumbo too

The deceased farmer, Chowdayya Nayak, had only recently survived an encounter with an elephant on his farmland. After spending three months recovering from a serious back injury, he had just begun to resume his daily routine. But the relief was short-lived. His death underscores the growing strain of human–wildlife conflict in the region.

GPS spoofing in Delhi airport delays 800 flights

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Over 800 domestic and international flights at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi were delayed on Friday, which comes after a GPS spoofing scare.

The flights were delayed due to technical problems with the air traffic control system at the Delhi airport, the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The problem was attributed to a technical glitch in the Air Traffic Control (ATC) system.

This marks the second major air traffic disruption at Delhi Airport this week. On Tuesday, flights were delayed due to GPS spoofing, which involves transferring false signals to mislead aircrafts about their real position.

The national capital's Indira Gandhi International Airport, the country's busiest airport, handles more than 1,500 flight movements daily.

IndiGo, Air India, Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa Air were some of the airlines hit. With the system issues continuing, air traffic controllers are preparing the flight plans manually with available data, which is a time-consuming process and as a result, many flights are getting delayed, the sources said.

Flight tracking website Flightradar24.com showed that over 800 flights have been delayed at the airport, and the delay for departing flights is around 50 minutes. *—PTI*

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CM says Centre's FRP rate is 'not scientific'

Siddaramaiah will lead an all-party delegation with mill owners to ask for better pricing from Centre

BENGALURU/ BELAGAVI, 7 NOV

Following a seven-hour meeting with protesting sugarcane farmers, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah slammed the Central government, saying the Fair Remunerative Price (FRP) was "not scientific". "The FRP set by the central government for sugarcane is not scientific," he said in a statement after the meeting on Friday.

"Sugar factories are showing lower recovery rates. To prevent this, a laboratory should be established on behalf of the government in front of every factory."

Factories have been asked to pay Rs 3,200 per tonne in one instalment to farmers, and Rs 50 subsequently, he said, "With the government giving Rs 50 per tonne, it may cost about Rs 300 crore to it." "Separate rates will be fixed from district to district according to the recovery rate," he said.

Most of the sugar factory owners have agreed to the price decided, Siddaramaiah said, "some of them had some reservation. I have asked them to cooperate to help the farmers in distress."

The Chief Minister said he will lead an all-party delegation also comprising of sugar mill owners to the Centre to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others. "We have stated that we are ready to take a delegation to the Centre, including representatives from all political parties, to press the Central government on increasing the MSP for sugar, increasing ethanol allocation, raising the sugar export limit, and similar matters," he said. The government would also hold a separate meeting with mill owners.

"The proposal to impose a tax of 60 paise per unit on the electricity sold by sugar factories will be reconsidered," Siddaramaiah said, adding that there are 81 sugar factories in the State, out of which 11 are cooperative and only one is government owned. Last year, 5.6 crore metric tonnes of sugarcane was produced in the State, and it is estimated that 6 crore metric tonnes of sugarcane will be produced this year, he said.

Sugarcane farmers block the Pune–Bengaluru National Highway, at Hattargi, near Belagavi on Friday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Issues relating to the FRP formula, the stagnating Minimum Support Price (MSP) for sugar, export curbs and the under-utilised ethanol offtake from sugar-based feedstock, has to be addressed by the Centre, he asserted.

CELEBRATIONS AND VIOLENCE

There were scenes of celebration following Chief Minister's announcement, at the protest site at Gurlapur Cross in Belagavi, by bursting crackers.

However, earlier in the day, protestors hurled water bottles and footwear at Ramdurg legislator Ashok Pattan. .*—Salar News with Agencies*

Resign if you can't govern: Opposition tells CM

- The Leader of Opposition slammed the Chief Minister for blaming the Centre and asked him to address the concerns of the farmers.

BENGALURU/ MYSURU, 7 NOV

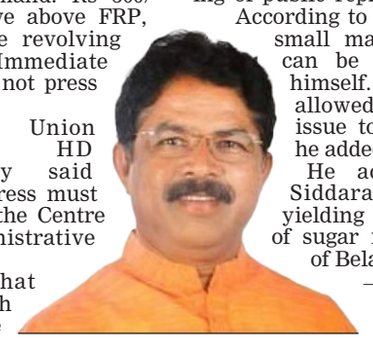
Hitting out at Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the sugarcane farmers' protest, BJP leader R Ashoka on Friday asked the Congress leader to quit if he can't govern.

The Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly slammed the Chief Minister for blaming the Centre and asked him to address the concerns of the farmers.

"7 days, thousands of sugarcane farmers on the streets, but CM Siddaramaiah has just one solution: Blame the Centre," Ashoka said on X.

Noting that when in Opposition, Siddaramaiah gave big sermons, he said, "But now (as CM), he hides behind excuses and abandons farmers. If you (Siddaramaiah) can't govern, resign and quit."

Ashoka in the post further said, "We demand: Rs 500/ tonne incentive above FRP, Rs 5,000 crore revolving fund, and Immediate intervention - not press conferences."



Meanwhile, Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy said that the Congress must stop blaming the Centre for its administrative failure.

Noting that Siddaramaiah had asked the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to increase the price for sugarcane, the JD(S) leader said there is no instance of the PM intervening in any state for sugarcane prices and such.

"The CM could have sorted out the issue if he had held discussion among farmers and sugar mill owners," Kumaraswamy alleged. "Instead the CM focussed on implementation of guarantee schemes."

"This is not a decision that can be taken by calling a meeting of public representatives. According to me this is a small matter, which can be decided by himself. They have allowed the small issue to grow big," he added.

He accused CM Siddaramaiah of yielding to the lobby of sugar mill owners of Belagavi.

—Salar News with Agencies

Does Centre control MSP? Joshi & HDK say no, Priyank says yes

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

CM Siddaramaiah has said that the Centre fixes the Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) and the Minimum Support Price (MSP), and wrote to PM Narendra Modi, asking the latter to increase the rates as per the farmers' demands. However, the BJP has claimed that the State government fixes the prices.

In his letter, Siddaramaiah also attributed the prices to limited ethanol offtake from sugar-based feedstock.

Union Minister Pralhad Joshi accused Siddaramaiah of deceiving people.

"You have failed to act according to the demands of the farmers," he wrote on X. "(You are) building a house of lies in Karnataka."

He claimed that the Centre was fair with its ethanol prices, and that "blending is being done to balance the excess sugar."

Similarly, Union Minister HD Kumarswamy said a senior leader like Siddaramaiah should know that Modi doesn't interfere with the prices of sugarcane.

However, Minister Priyank Kharge posted a 2 October letter from Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis to the Joshi, seeking Union intervention into the MSP and FRP for sugarcane growers in Maharashtra.

"Joshi has said that it is foolish to ask for the intervention of the Central Government," Priyank wrote on X. "Fadnavis had written a letter to Joshi himself demanding MSP and FRP for sugarcane growers. Is Fadnavis also foolish?"

He asked BJP ministers to "a public declaration of your internal policy that the cooperation and response of the Centre will be for the BJP ruled states." *—Salar News*

Lokayukta raids 6 RTO offices over corruption

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Acting on credible information about "rampant corruption", the Karnataka Lokayukta on Friday launched surprise searches at six Regional Transport Offices (RTOs) across the City, the agency said in a statement.

Justice BS Patil, Hon'ble Lokayukta, issued six search warrants and formed teams comprising Judicial and Police Officers to carry out the simultaneous inspections from 1pm.

Justice Patil visited the RTO offices at Yeshwanthpura (North) and Rajajinagar (West) at 3 pm, while Justice KN Phaneendra, Upalokayukta-1, inspected the Jayanagar (South) and Yelahanka offices. Justice B Veerappa, Upalokayukta-2, visited the Kasthurinagar (East) and KR Puram RTOs, the statement added.

The coordinated operation marks a major move by the Lokayukta Institution to tackle corruption and ensure transparency in public offices. *—Salar News*

Congress cannot replace Siddaramaiah, says HDK

MYSURU, 7 NOV

JD(S) leader HD Kumaraswamy said there will be no Chief Minister change as is being speculated, because it is not easy for the Congress party to replace Siddaramaiah.

Siddaramaiah was earlier with the JD(S), the Union Minister noted. The JD(S) knows what Siddaramaiah is capable of.

"There will be no revolution in my opinion," Kumaraswamy said in response to a question. "He (Siddaramaiah) was with us earlier, others don't know what he is. As he was with us earlier, we know what he is capable of doing."

"It is not easy for Congress to remove him. What discussions have happened between them (within the Congress), we have nothing to do with it," he added.

Kumaraswamy seemingly mocked the prospect of Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar taking over as CM, saying the Irrigation Minister asks God everyday to become Chief Minister.

"It is between him and god," Kumaraswamy remarked.

There have been speculations about a Chief Minister change in the State when the Congress government reaches the halfway mark of its five-year term (20 November), being referred to by some as "November revolution".

On the Greater Mysuru plan, Kumaraswamy said both Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar are competing over the Greater Mysuru and Greater Bengaluru Authority. Nothing will come out of it, he predicted. To a question, on what the JD(S)'s role will be if there is a political revolution, Kumaraswamy said "we are not concerned with what they will do."

—Salar News

SEEKING TAX CUTS

JD(S) members oppose the State government for imposing higher revenue tax, calling it 'tax terrorism', during a protest at the Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

HAL seals deal with GE Aerospace for jet engines

KALABURAGI, 7 NOV

The Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) on Friday sealed a major deal with American defence major GE Aerospace to procure 113 jet engines for its Tejas light combat aircraft programme.

The firming up of the deal came notwithstanding a downturn in India-US relations after the Trump administration slapped a 50 per cent tariff on Indian goods.

Under the deal, the delivery of the F404-GE-IN20 engines will begin from 2027 and the supplies will have to be completed by 2032.

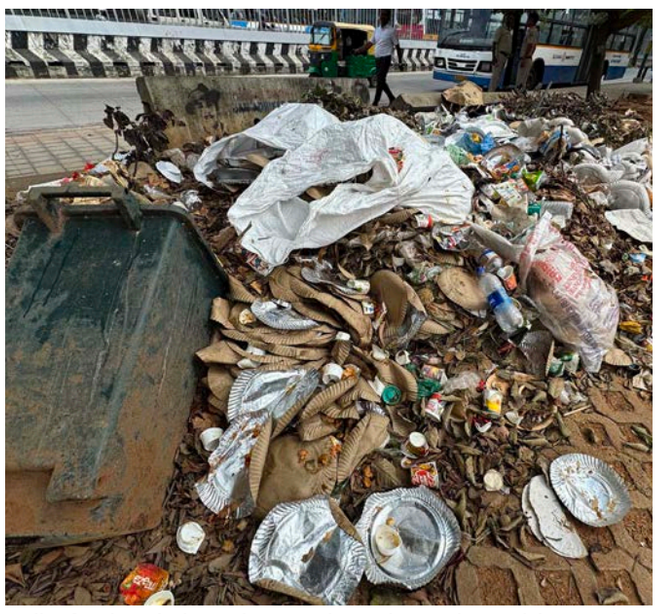
The size of the deal is learnt to be close to USD 1 billion (approximately Rs 8,870 crore). The HAL said it has entered into an agreement with General Electric Company to acquire the engines and support package for execution of 97 Light Combat Aircraft Mk1A programme.

The defence ministry in September sealed a Rs 62,370 crore deal with the HAL to procure 97 Tejas MK-1A light combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

Tejas is a single-engine multi-role fighter aircraft capable of operating in high-threat air environments.It has been designed to undertake the air defence, maritime reconnaissance and strike roles.

The HAL is also using GE F404-IN20 engines to power another lot of LCA MK1A fighter jets. *—PTI*

STINKY CITY



A pile of garbage is dumped on a road near the Freedom Park in Bengaluru on Friday **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

Arabic teacher held for burglaries in Kalaburagi

KALABURAGI, 7 NOV

- The accused targeted areas under the University Police Station's jurisdiction, with thefts amounting to Rs 1.35 lakh, Rs 9.57 lakh, and Rs 4.22 lakh respectively.

Police have apprehended a suspect linked to a string of house burglaries in the City, identifying him as Muhammad Arif Ali, a 50-year-old resident of Bilalabad Colony.

Officers recovered stolen items, including 100 grams of gold ornaments valued at Rs 13.41 lakh, 200 grams of silver ornaments worth Rs 16,000, and a motorbike used in the crimes.

City Police Commissioner Sharanappa SD stated, "The accused was an Arabic teacher at a mosque. During the day, he taught while surveilling locked houses on his bike. He committed the thefts between 3am. and 4.30am., confessing he turned to crime to support his family's finances and repay debts."

Ali targeted areas under the University Police Station's jurisdiction, with notable thefts that he conducted on 27 April, 5 October and between 20 and 24 October, amounting to amounts worth Rs 1.35 lakh, Rs 9.57 lakh, and Rs 4.22 lakh respectively. " *—Salar News*

Woman raped by brother in Koppal

KOPPAL, 7 NOV

A shocking incident has emerged from the Koppal Rural Police Station, where a 21-year-old brother has been accused of raping his 17-year-old minor sister, resulting in her giving birth to a child. The police have registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act based on the girl's complaint.

The victim, who delivered a baby boy last week, stated that her brother had convinced her into believing that he would marry her, despite her initial objections.

"If you do this to your brother and sister, society will not accept us," she told her brother, police said, quoting the FIR. Nonetheless, the brother persisted, assuring her, "I will never leave you. Don't worry about what society thinks."

He allegedly started abusing her in February. The victim claimed she tried to inform her parents but was threatened with suicide by her brother.

On 30 October, she went to Koppal District Hospital, where she medical tests revealed she was pregnant. *—Salar News*

'PEACE MEETS WENT WELL'

Will consider RSS Chittapur march: State govt to HC

- The advocate general told the court that there were 11 pending applications for similar processions across the State and said the authorities would consider all of them and grant permission.

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

The State government on Friday informed the Karnataka High Court that it will positively consider the proposal submitted by the Kalaburagi convenor of RSS to hold a route march in Chittapur town.

The submission came after the High Court's earlier direction on 30 October, asking RSS convenor Ashok Patil to meet district authorities on 5 November at the Advocate General's office to discuss the modalities of conducting the event.

Senior advocate Aruna Shyam, representing the petitioner, and Advocate General (AG) Shashi Kiran Shetty were also directed to participate in the meeting to ensure smooth coordination.

Children during the silver jubilee celebrations of 'Nele foundation' (a home for destitute children) for the RSS in the City on Friday; (Left) RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat **PHOTO: MOHAMMAD ASAD**

During the hearing before Justice MGS Kamal, Shyam told the court that the meeting "went very well", with all parties actively participating. "We have made a representation, and the discussions were constructive," he submitted.

The advocate general told the court that there were 11 pending applications for similar processions across the State and said the authorities would consider all of them and grant permission.

"We will grant permission to everybody as a one-time measure, not to be seen as a precedent," the AG said, seeking a week's time to finalise the permissions.

Recording the submissions, the High Court noted that the 5 November meeting was "fruitful and positive." It further stated that the petitioner's proposed dates--13 and 16 November --were being considered favourably and that the State would communicate its decision soon.

The case will next be heard on 13 November.

The issue began when authorities in Chittapur, the home constituency of Minister Priyank Kharge, denied permission for the RSS route march on 19 October, citing the possibility of disruption of peace and law and order in the area. *—PTI*

RJD candidate threatens poll booth guard

PATNA, 7 NOV

Bhai Virendra, the RJD candidate for Patna's Maner Assembly seat, has been booked for allegedly threatening security personnel on polling duty. The incident occurred when the candidate misbehaved with the guard who was aiding an elderly woman to locate her polling booth, reported Danapur-2 SDPO Amrendra Kumar Jha. "He also threatened him with dire consequences," SDPO Jha noted. Following a formal complaint lodged by the security personnel, a case has been registered against Virendra for violating the model code of conduct. Voting took place in 121 constituencies on Thursday, with a remarkable turnout of approximately 65 per cent among the 3.75 crore electors participating in the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections. *—PTI*

Jarange accuses NCP MLA of murder plot, MLA denies it

CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJINAGAR, 7 NOV

Maratha quota activist Manoj Jarange has levelled serious allegations against former Maharashtra minister and NCP MLA Dhananjay Munde, claiming he plotted to murder him. Jarange's associate Gangadhar Kalkute lodged a complaint, prompting police action that led to two arrests. "Dhananjay Munde plotted to kill me," Marathe leader Jarange stated, alleging that a person identified as Kanchan facilitated a suspicious meeting with detained suspects. He claimed plans included creating fake videos to defame him or using poisons for assassination, with a deal reportedly set at Rs 2.5 crore. Munde dismissed the claims as "baseless, malicious, and politically motivated," asserting that the detained individuals were connected to Jarange. He has called for a CBI probe into the allegations. *—PTI*

SC declines RJD candidate's plea on nomination

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain RJD candidate Sweta Suman's plea challenging the rejection of her nomination for Bihar's Mohania (SC) seat over an allegedly fake caste certificate. A bench led by Chief Justice B R Gavai said courts cannot interfere once the election process begins, advising her to file an election petition instead. The Patna High Court had earlier dismissed her plea on similar grounds. Mohania votes in the second phase on 11 November. *—PTI*

Hiding conviction of candidate makes poll void:SC

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court has ruled that a candidate's failure to disclose a prior conviction in the nomination form will result in automatic disqualification from election. A bench of Justices P S Narasimha and A S Chandurkar made the observation while dismissing an appeal by Poonam, a former councillor of Nagar Parishad, Bhikangaon in Madhya Pradesh, who was unseated for concealing her conviction in a cheque bounce case. Poonam had been sentenced to one year's imprisonment and ordered to pay compensation. Upholding her disqualification, the court said non-disclosure of a conviction prevents voters from making an informed choice. "Once it is found that there has been non-disclosure of a previous conviction, it creates an impediment in the free exercise of electoral right by a voter," the bench said, adding that such suppression renders the election "void". *—PTI*

Tagore adviced on 2 paras of song: Cong

Accuses Narendra Modi of 'distorting history' about 'Vande Mataram', asks him to apology

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Congress hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday after his attack on the party over the dropping of stanzas from Vande Mataram in 1937, saying Rabindranath Tagore himself had suggested that only the first two stanzas of the song be adopted.

The party said it was 'shameful' of the prime minister to accuse the Nobel laureate of harbouring a divisive ideology and demanded an apology.

In an apparent attack on the Congress, Modi said important stanzas of the national song were omitted in 1937, sowing the seeds of partition, and asserted that such a divisive mindset still challenged the country. He made the remarks while inaugurating the year-long commemoration of Vande Mataram to mark 150 years of the song, where he also released a commemorative stamp and coin at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

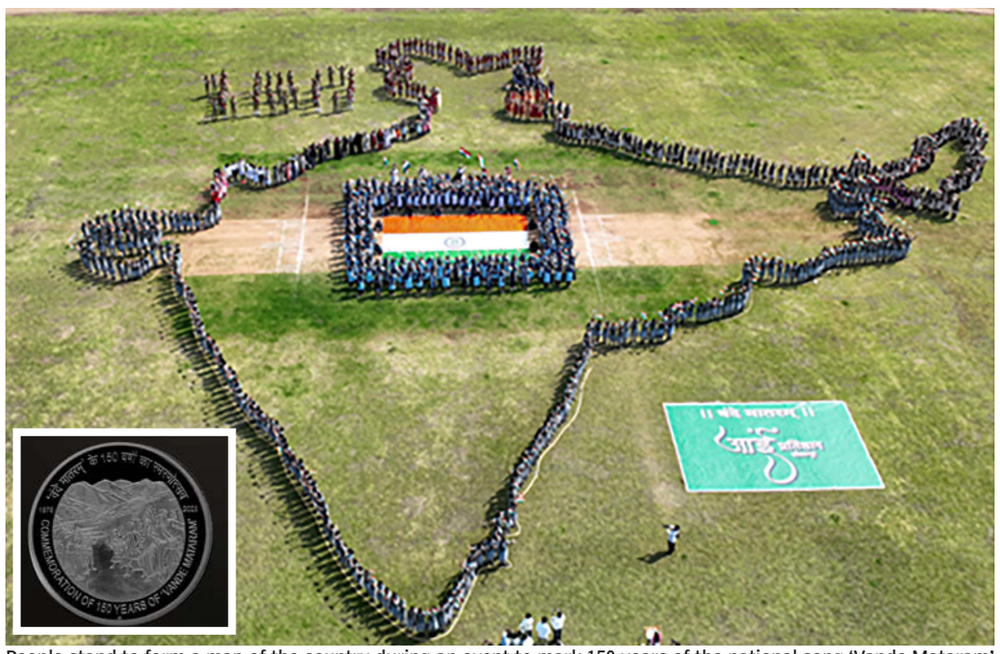
Reacting to the statement, Congress general secretary in-charge of communications Jairam Ramesh cited excerpts from historian Sabyasachi Bhattacharya's biography of Vande Mataram, outlining the background of the Congress Working Committee's resolution of 29 October, 1937, which adopted the song.

"Three days before the meeting, on 26 October, 1937, Tagore wrote to Jawaharlal Nehru suggesting that the first two stanzas be adopted. His letter shaped the resolution in its entirety," Ramesh posted on X.

"The prime minister is now accusing Gurudev of harbouring a divisive ideology. It is a shameful statement from a man whose distortions have no limits.

The people of India demand an unconditional apology," he added.

On 24 January, 1950, the Constituent Assembly officially adopted Vande Mataram as the national song, retaining only the first two stanzas penned by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee. *—PTI*



People stand to form a map of the country during an event to mark 150 years of the national song 'Vande Mataram' in Solapur, Maharashtra. (Inset) The Prime Minister launched a coin to commemorate the occasion **PHOTO: PTI**

BJP slams SP MLA for refusing to sing song

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

Mumbai BJP chief Ameet Satam on Friday said those wishing to live in India must recite "Vande Mataram", as he led a protest outside Samajwadi Party MLA Abu Asim Azmi's Colaba residence.

The demonstration followed Azmi's opposition to BJP's plan to mark 150 years of the national song with mass recitals across Mumbai. "Vande Mataram is about patriotism. True citizens must proudly say it," Satam said, joined by Speaker Rahul Narwekar, minister Mangal Prabhat Lodha and party workers.

Responding in a video, Azmi cited a court order prohibiting coercion and said he would sue those threatening him. "According to my religion, I cannot bow before anything except Allah," he said, accusing the BJP of dividing communities and "suppressing" Muslims. He labelled the party the "Bharat Jalao Party". Written by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in 1875, "Vande Mataram" was adopted as India's national song in 1950. *—PTI*

NO EXTERNAL MEDDLING: J&K CM ON NO EVENTS IN SCHOOLS

Jammu and Kashmir CM Omar Abdullah dismissed outside interference in governance, clarifying schools were not directed to mark "Vande Mataram's" 150th anniversary. He said such decisions rest locally, responding to backlash from religious groups calling the directive coercive and faith-incompatible. *—PTI*

Modi became PM by stealing votes, says RaGa

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday intensified his attack on the BJP, accusing it of "wholesale theft" of elections and claiming Prime Minister Narendra Modi became PM by "stealing" polls.

Addressing reporters and rallies in Haryana and Bihar, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha alleged that the BJP, aided by the Election Commission, manipulated voter lists in several states.

Gandhi reiterated his charge that the Haryana assembly elections last year were "stolen", citing data that allegedly showed 25 lakh fake entries in electoral rolls. "We will show India's youth how the BJP steals elections. The process is on, and there will be no doubt left," he said, adding that the same was done in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat.

BJP leader, voted in both Delhi and Bihar

At an election rally in Bihar's Banka, he claimed BJP leaders who voted in Delhi also cast ballots in Bihar. "Out of two crore voters in Haryana, 29 lakh are fake. The BJP indulged in 'vote chori' there and now wants to repeat it in Bihar," he alleged.

Gandhi further accused the BJP-led government of diverting public attention through social media. "They are asking youth to make reels while ignoring real issues," he said. He also criticised the alleged corporate bias in loan waivers, claiming farmers and labourers get no relief while "certain corporates" benefit.

The BJP dismissed Gandhi's allegations as "false and baseless", accusing him of undermining the Election Commission and India's democratic institutions. *—PTI*

LoP in the Lok Sabha and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with supporters during a public rally for the Bihar Assembly polls, in Bihar **PHOTO: PTI**

PM credits record turnout to 'Narendra-Nitish' collab

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the record turnout in the first phase of the Bihar assembly elections reflected people's faith in the "track record of Narendra and Nitish", predicting a decisive victory for the NDA.

Addressing a rally in Aurangabad, Modi lauded the Election Commission for conducting peaceful polls across 121 constituencies, noting that women voters had turned out in unprecedented numbers.

"The people have voted to continue the NDA's good governance. They trust the Narendra-Nitish partnership," Modi said, adding that the opposition's "false promises" failed to mislead voters. He took a swipe at the Congress, claiming it "does not trust" its ally RJD's manifesto, which he termed a "packet of lies".

Modi also attacked the RJD, saying "jungle raj wallahs" had once taught even children to talk of guns and violence, and alleged that they still threaten law and order.

He credited Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with ending "jungle raj" despite facing "non-cooperation" from the UPA government during his early tenure.

Recounting the NDA's achievements, Modi said, "I do what I promise — Ram temple, Article 370, and Operation Sindoor prove it." He urged voters to "punish" the opposition for insulting cultural traditions like Chhath Puja and Maha Kumbh. The Prime Minister expressed confidence that Bihar would again choose "sushasan sarkar" under the NDA. *—PTI*

PM Narendra Modi being felicitated during a public meeting, amid the ongoing Bihar Assembly elections, in Aurangabad, on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

SC to hear pan-India SIR pleas on 11 Nov

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear on 11 November pleas challenging the Election Commission's decision to conduct a pan-India Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi said it will start hearing the pleas from 11 November onwards after advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for NGO, Association of Democratic Reforms, said the issue goes to the root of democracy.

The bench said though several important matters are listed, it would try to adjust the hearing of other matters to take up SIR matters.

Bhushan said urgency of the matter is because the SIR has started in different states.

The top court is already hearing pleas challenging the validity of the poll panel's decision to conduct the Special Intensive Revision (SIR) in Bihar.

Meanwhile, the Trinamool Congress on Friday alleged inconsistency between the Chief Election Commissioner's recent remarks and the written instructions issued to booth-level officers (BLOs) for the ongoing SIR of electoral rolls in West Bengal. In a letter to state's Chief Electoral Officer, the party claimed that the matter has caused "widespread confusion and operational paralysis" among BLOs across several districts.

Additionally, Supreme Court agreed to hear on 11 November the plea of DMK challenging the decision of EC to conduct SIR exercise in Tamil Nadu. *—PTI*

Ajit Pawar meets CM after son named in scam

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI/ PUNE, 7 NOV

A day after a firm linked to his son faced allegations of involvement in an illegal land deal, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister **Ajit Pawar** on Friday met Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis here.

NCP leaders Praful Patel and Sunil Tatkare accompanied Ajit. The Rs 300 crore deal for a 40-acre plot involving a firm linked to Parth Pawar, Ajit's eldest son, has come under the scanner for alleged irregularities. Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged that government land in Maharashtra worth Rs 1,800 crore, which was reserved for Dalits, was sold to a company linked to a state minister's son and claimed that this "land theft" is done by the government, which was formed through "vote theft". Additionally, Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule urged the Opposition to wait for a month until the high-level committee submits its report on land deal case.

In a related development, Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sushma Andhare accused Maharashtra's revenue and police departments of trying to save Ajit's son, from action in the land deal case. *—PTI*

'UDF has no tie with Jamaat'

T'PURAM, 7 NOV

Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly, VD Satheesan, on Friday said the Congress-led UDF has no arrangements with the Jamaat-e-Islami but has accepted its support in elections since 2019.

He accused the CPI(M) of trying to create a communal issue over the matter.

In remarks that may become an issue in the campaign for the upcoming local body polls in the state, Satheesan, a prominent Congress leader, also alleged that the Islamist outfit had been with the CPI(M) for 30 years, during which time the Left party had no problems with it.

"Jamaat-e-Islami has supported us, and we have accepted that support. They are not part of the UDF nor one of its associate members, and there is no arrangement between them and us," Satheesan said.

Accusing the CPI(M), he said, "You (the media) should ask Chief Minister Vijayan when the Jamaat became a communal force. Was it when they stopped supporting the CPI(M) and began backing the Congress-led UDF?"

He said a decision on expanding the UDF by adding smaller parties would be taken before the local body polls. *—PTI*

Yunus losing grip to rise of Islamists: Hasina

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina accused interim leader Muhammad Yunus of lacking control over his administration, alleging Islamist factions tied to terror groups are spreading extremism under his rule.

Writing in The Week, Hasina said true democracy is impossible under an unelected leader who has banned the Awami League and denied citizens their voting rights. She warned that violence against minorities, women and party supporters has surged since Yunus took office, eroding Bangladesh's secular fabric. Calling the interim charter "a tool to legitimise authoritarianism," Hasina said Yunus's inexperience has deepened instability. She urged restoring participatory elections to end decades of political manipulation and uphold Bangladesh's democratic and secular foundations. *—PTI*

BIHAR POLLS

59% of unrecognised parties failed to disclose finances: ADR

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) has said that more than half of the registered but unrecognised political parties associated with Bihar have failed to make their mandatory financial disclosures public for 2023-24.

According to an ADR report, of the 275 such parties reviewed by them --184 registered in Bihar and 91 in other states – 163 (59.27 per cent) have neither uploaded their audit reports nor statements of donations above Rs 20,000 on the websites of state chief electoral officers or the Election Commission (EC). Of these, 113 had contested the 2020 Bihar Assembly polls.

The report showed only 67 parties (24.36 per cent) made both audit and contribution reports publicly available for 2023-24, collectively declaring an income of Rs 85.56 crore, expenditure of Rs 71.49 crore and donations worth Rs 71.73 crore.

The Samata Party, registered in Delhi, reported the highest income at Rs 53.13 crore, followed by the Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) at Rs 9.59 crore.

PHOTO: AI

The ADR's assessment also captured recent EC action that de-listed 32 parties in August and September for issues including inactivity and non-compliance.

Among the de-listed parties, the highest income was declared by the Rashtriya Sarvodaya Party of Bihar (registered in January 2014) with Rs 1,066.37 lakh (Rs 10.66 crore) over five years, peaking at Rs 426.34 lakh (Rs 4.26 crore) in Financial Year 2021-22. According to available information, it did not contest elections.

The highest five-year income of Rs 82.39 lakh was declared by the Mithilawadi Party (registered in September 2020), with a steady annual income of around Rs 20 lakh. This was followed by the Shoshit Inquilab Party, with a total income of Rs 29.49 lakh and the Gantantrik Janhit Party with a total income of Rs 21.05 lakh. *—PTI*

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM

Katrina Kaif, Vicky Kaushal welcome baby boy

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

Bollywood stars Katrina Kaif and Vicky Kaushal on Friday announced the birth of their first child, a baby boy. The couple shared a joint Instagram post that read, "Our bundle of joy has arrived. With immense gratitude, we welcome our baby boy. 7th November, 2025, Katrina & Vicky." Married on 9 December 2021 in an intimate ceremony in Rajasthan, the duo revealed Katrina's pregnancy in September through a photo showing them admiring her baby bump. Vicky was last seen in the period drama 'Chhaava' and will appear in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's upcoming 'Love and War'. Katrina's most recent film was the 2024 thriller 'Merry Christmas' opposite Vijay Sethupathi. *—PTI*

MP septuagenerian 'comes back to life' before funeral

INDORE, 7 NOV

A home that plunged into mourning in Madhya Pradesh's Indore erupted in joy after a 70-year-old man, presumed dead by his family, started breathing again even as preparations were underway for his funeral. Sanjay Vaid said that his father, Makhanlal Vaid, was admitted to a private hospital in the city on 1 November after he suffered a brain haemorrhage. His condition deteriorated after a surgery and he was put on life support. His family believed the septuagenarian passed away after being taken off life support. However, within half an hour after he was brought home, Vaid's father started breathing again. Terming the event a miracle, Vaid said that his father is recuperating at home. *—PTI*

Maoists, security forces clash in Jharkhand forest

CHAIBASA, 7 NOV

An encounter broke out between security forces and CPI (Maoist) cadres in Jharkhand's Saranda forest in West Singhbhum district, a senior police official said on Friday. The exchange occurred on 6 November when a joint team of CRPF, Jharkhand Jaguar, and district armed police was on an anti-Maoist mission. Maoists opened fire, prompting retaliation from the forces, superintendent of police Amit Renu said. The operation was still underway, and arms along with explosives were seized from the site, he added. However, unofficial sources claimed that one Maoist was killed and many injured. *—PTI*

PHOTO: ANI

Anti-Sikh riots: Govt to reply on convict's furlough

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Delhi High Court on Friday sought the Delhi government's response to a plea by former Congress councillor Balwan Khokhar, serving a life sentence in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case, seeking 21-day furlough to rebuild social ties. Justice Ravinder Dudeja issued notice to the government and jail authorities, directing a status report by 17 November. The court advanced the hearing from 16 December after allowing Khokhar's early hearing request. Khokhar challenged the order rejecting his furlough, citing concerns over public order. Convicted in 2013 for the murder of five Sikhs and rioting in Ghaziabad's Raj Nagar, his conviction was upheld in 2018, while Sajjan Kumar was later convicted in the same case. *—PTI*

SC junks plea against MP mosque's demolition

200-year-old mosque was demolished to expand parking

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Supreme Court on Friday dismissed a plea challenging an order that rejected a petition seeking directions for the reconstruction of a mosque in Madhya Pradesh's Ujjain, which was demolished following land acquisition.

The Takiya Masjid, stated to be established around 200 years ago, was demolished in January after the land on which it was built was acquired.

Authorities had initiated the land-acquisition proceedings in order to expand the parking space of the Mahakal Lok Parishar in Ujjain.

A plea challenging an order of the Madhya Pradesh High Court came up for hearing before the apex court.

The high court had dismissed an appeal challenging a single-judge order that rejected a plea seeking directions to authorities for the reconstruction of the mosque.

Authorities conducting demolition of the Takiya Masjid in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

During the hearing, the counsel for 13 petitioners told the apex court that the 200-year-old mosque was demolished as parking space was required.

"It was required under the statutory scheme, compensation paid. You filed a writ petition challenging the same acquisition which was dismissed as withdrawn," the bench observed.

The counsel said the mosque was declared a Waqf property in 1985.

Before the high court, the petitioners had said they were residents of Ujjain and used to offer namaz in the mosque.

Authorities had told the court that the land was acquired after following the due process of law, compensation was paid and all the properties were now vested with the state government.

They had contended that there cannot be any illegality in demolishing the mosque to make the land vacant for the expansion of the parking area.

"The petitioners have no locus to seek reconstruction of the masjid. We do not find any ground to interfere with the order passed," HC said. *—PTI*

People wait outside the entrance of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Flight delays at Delhi airport spill over to other cities

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

- Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Varanasi, and other international airports, as originating flights from Delhi to these airports are delayed.

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai issued an advisory on Friday, saying that the flight operations from the airport have been affected due to a technical issue impacting the automatic message switching system (AMSS) at Delhi and warned of further flight delays.

This came after over 400 flights were delayed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi airport due to a technical problem with the air traffic control messaging system, according to the Airports Authority of India.

The AMSS failure at the Delhi airport has started impacting Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Varanasi, and other major international airports, as originating flights from Delhi to these airports are delayed.

The AMSS provides the information for the auto track system (AMS), which gives the flight plans.

However, the AAI is yet to confirm any such issue in other airports.

There were long queues near boarding gates and hundreds of passengers were waiting inside the airport terminals for flight updates.

The issues are caused air traffic congestion at the airport and authorities are working to fix the problems.

"Due to an ongoing technical issue with the AMSS, flights across all airlines at #DelhiAirport and some other airports in the northern region are currently experiencing delays," IndiGo said in a post on X.

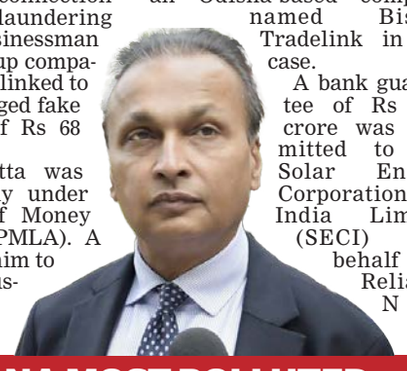
Veteran pilot Captain Sharath Panicker explained that the system failure necessitated manual input of flight plans, leading to delays. Meteorological data integration was done manually. *—PTI*

1 more held in Reliance Power 'fake' bank guarantee scam

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has made a fresh and the third arrest in connection with a money laundering probe against businessman Anil Ambani's group company Reliance Power linked to issuance of an alleged fake bank guarantee of Rs 68 crore.

Amar Nath Dutta was taken into custody under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). A special court sent him to four days in ED custody.



The probe agency had arrested former Reliance Power CFO Ashok Kumar and Pal Partha Sarathi Biswal, MD of an Odisha-based company named Biswal Tradelink in the case.

A bank guarantee of Rs 68.2 crore was submitted to the Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI) on behalf of Reliance N U BESS Limited, a subsidiary of Reliance Power, which was found to be "fake".

The case stems from the Delhi Police's economic offences wing's FIR, which alleged that the Biswal Tradelink was engaged in issuing "fake" bank guarantees against a commission of 8 per cent.

Reliance NU BESS Ltd. submitted a bank guarantee from the FirstRand Bank located in Manila, Philippines, though the bank does not have a branch there.

Reliance Power had claimed to be a "victim of forgery and cheating conspiracy." *—PTI*

Google to remove Rajat Sharma's deepfake videos

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The Delhi High Court on Friday directed Google LLC to take down two YouTube channels hosting and circulating deepfake and fabricated videos using the personality rights of journalist Rajat Sharma. It asked Google to take them down within 36 hours and to disclose BSI details, access and contact details and monetisation data of the channels to Sharma within one week. The lawsuit alleges that the firms were perpetuating gross misinformation for the creation of doctored videos bearing Sarma's distorted images. *—PTI*

BAWANA MOST POLLUTED

An aerial view of the Mayur Vihar area shrouded in smog in New Delhi on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Delhi's AQI continues to be 'very poor'

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Delhi woke up to another day of hazardous air on Friday, with the city's overall Air Quality Index (AQI) recorded at 309 at 9am, rising slightly to 311 later in the morning, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Of the 38 monitoring stations across the capital, 26 registered air quality in the "very poor" category. Bawana was the most polluted area with an AQI of 366, followed by Jahangirpuri at 348.

The CPCB classifies air quality between 301 and 400 as "very poor", which can cause respiratory discomfort and health issues for sensitive groups.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) reported a minimum temperature of 12.7°C, 1.6°C below normal, with humidity at 67 per cent at 8.30am. The maximum temperature is expected to reach around 26°C, with shallow fog likely to persist, reducing visibility in several parts of the city.

A layer of shallow fog was likly to persist throughout the day, resulting in low visibility in the city. *—PTI*

Brit facing deportation flees Delhi airport

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

A significant security breach occurred at Indira Gandhi International Airport when a British national, identified as Fitz Patrick, escaped from the immigration area after arriving from Bangkok on 28 October. Although scheduled for deportation to the UK via Thailand, Patrick managed to evade authorities before being formally processed.

"A security lapse was reported at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport after a British national, who was to be deported to the UK via Thailand, escaped from the immigration area and entered the city," stated a senior police officer. In response, Delhi Police and various security agencies have initiated a massive search operation and filed a First Information Report (FIR), while also questioning airline staff.

The British national who was to be deported to the UK via Thailand escaped from the Delhi airport's immigration area on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), responsible for airport security, is collaborating with the Bureau of Immigration and Delhi Police to locate the fugitive. Officials are reviewing airport CCTV footage to ascertain the sequence of events and identify potential security lapses that led to the escape.

A case was registered and a manhunt is on in the National Capital Region. *—PTI*

B'deshi working in Indian military station held

The Indian Army arrested a Bangladeshi national employed as a civilian labourer at the Bengdubi military station near Siliguri, North Bengal, officials said on Friday. The arrest followed a reverification drive of civil personnel at the base, located near the strategic 'Chicken's Neck' corridor. The man was found carrying a Bangladeshi identity card along with Indian Aadhaar, PAN and voter ID cards. He was handed over to police. *—PTI*

Students' body found in Russia dam

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The body of the Indian student who went missing in October from Ufa in Russia has reportedly been found in a dam near the White River.

Ajit Singh Chaudhary, 22, hailing from Rajasthan's Alwar had joined Bashkir State Medical University for an MBBS course in 2023.

Chaudhary had gone missing on 19 October 19 after he left his hostel at around 11am to buy milk. His mobile phone was switched off at the time.

The All India Medical Students' Association has written to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma to help repatriate Chaudhary's body to India.

His family was informed about the incident by the Russian police on 20 October, after which they tried to reach out to the college authorities, but haven't received any reply yet. *—PTI*

J&K doctor held for distributing JeM posters

SAHARANPUR, 7 NOV

A doctor employed at a private hospital in Saharanpur was arrested and handed over to Jammu and Kashmir Police for allegedly distributing posters advocating the banned terrorist group, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), in Srinagar.

Additional superintendent of police Vyom Bindal stated, "The accused, Adil Ahmed, a resident of Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, was working at a private hospital in Saharanpur."

He was apprehended by Srinagar police on 6 November following a case registered after JeM posters appeared across various city locations. Authorities revealed that during investigation, the police examined CCTV footage, which had captured a man affixing the posters. The man was later identified as Ahmed.

The Jammu and Kashmir police tracked his location to Saharanpur and, with the aid of local police and the Special Operations Group, conducted a raid on the private hospital on Ambala Road and took the doctor into custody.

Ahmed was subsequently proiduced before a court, which granted his transit remand to the Srinagar police for further investigation *—PTI*

'OBJECTIFYING FEMALE ACTOR'

Actress Gouri Kishan slams scribe for body shaming

CHENNAI, 7 NOV

Actress Gouri G Kishan has slammed a YouTuber for asking a derogatory question about her weight during a press conference for the Tamil film 'Others' here. Her reply went viral, earning her support from numerous personalities.

The Chennai Press Club condemned the YouTuber who asked an inappropriate question to the actress, who is well known for her work in Tamil and Malayalam cinema.

In the video that went viral, Gouri could be heard asking the man, "how does my weight concern you in any way..... It is nothing but body shaming.."

Her co-star in the film that was released on Friday, Aditya Madhavan said that his silence didn't mean approval of the body shaming of anyone.

Condemning the YouTuber, the South Indian Artists Association said it was "worrying that a few crooked people in the guise of journalism are mocking and humiliating actresses."

When the Youtuber argued with her, Gouri replied, "Every woman has a different body type. I will let my talent speak. I have done character-driven films so far. I don't need your validation."

Wondering if he would ask such a question to a male actor, Gouri said, "You are objectifying a female actor. . You are a disgrace to your profession."

She also expressed concern that none among those present supported her. *—PTI*

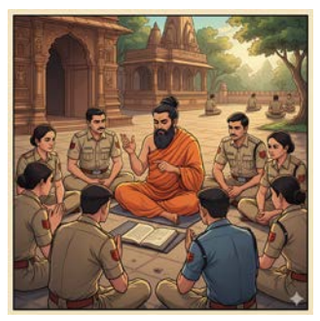
MP constables to take Bhagavad Gita sessions

BHOPAL, 7 NOV

After Ramcharitmanas, the Madhya Pradesh Police training wing on Friday directed all its centres to hold Bhagavad Gita recital sessions for their recruits, as this will help them lead a "righteous" life.

The direction has been issued by additional director general of police (Training) Raja Babu Singh to the superintendents of all eight training schools in the state. There are approximately 4,000 young men and women in these facilities undergoing a nine-month constable training since July this year.

Singh had directed the recital of Ramcharitmanas at these institutions while inaugurating their training session in July, saying this would instil discipline in them. The Ramcharitmanas describes the virtues of Lord Rama and his exile for 14 years in the forests.



Singh, an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the 1994 batch, asked training school directors to initiate, if possible, reading of at least one chapter of the Bhagavad Gita before the meditation session of the trainees during the ongoing holy month of Lord Krishna. *—PTI*

LOVE IS LOVE

Two young women from Sundarbans in West Bengal got married at a local temple, breaking the societal norms on same-sex relationships. 19-year-old Riya Sardar and 20-year-old Rakhi Naskar, both professional dancers, met about 2 years ago. Sardar, who lost her parents at a young age, was living with her aunt and uncle. They did not accept Sardar's relationship, which resulted in her leaving home and moving in with Naskar, whose family was very supportive of their relationship. After a discussion with neighbours, a simple wedding was later arranged

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Bihar's youth want jobs, not caste-based politics

G23-year-old Bhavya Singh, who voted for the first time in the first phase of Bihar elections, said she felt more excited being part of a democratic exercise in pursuance of choosing the next government than seeing the indelible ink daubed on her finger.

Pursuing her master's in commerce from an open university, she spelt out what a youngster like her expect from "whichever alliance comes to power".

"If the party I voted for comes to power, it is good, but even if it doesn't, and another one takes its place, I will be fine, as I have taken part in the democratic process that would result in it," Bhavya told PTI.

She, her elder brother Shivam Pratap Singh, and mother Rekha Singh came out to vote in the afternoon in the key Kumhrar constituency, when not many voters had turned out to exercise their franchise.

"Now, there are more opportunities for women in sports and education in Bihar. But when comes to higher education or labour or skilled jobs, our resources and talent continue to get lost to other states due to migration in search of a better livelihood," Bhavya said.

She underlined that this migration has to be curtailed by the government of Bihar, irrespective of who assumes its reins, and more jobs and quality higher education need to be provided in the state.

Bhavya also rued that even 70 years after independence, "caste-based politics" is still in vogue and "exploited by political leaders for immediate gains".

Also, "paper leaks" when it comes to competitive or regular examinations, should be stopped, she demanded.

Her sibling, Shivam, 28, echoes her sentiments and asserted that many voters make "wrong decision-making" due to lack of "proper education and awareness".

He also said the media, especially TV media, has a big role to play in shaping aware citizens who do not get "biased" before casting their vote, but weigh all options with a sound sense of judgement.

Elections to the 121 seats of the 243-member assembly were held on Thursday, while the remaining 122 constituencies will go to polls on 11 November

PHOTO: PTI

Many first-time voters in other important seats falling in the city limits of Patna -- Bankipore, Patna Sahib, Digha -- expressed similar views, but also professed different allegiances. Some said they were "satisfied" with the existing dispensation but many others asserted, a "change was imminent", and a few said, a "third option" has emerged with the Jan Suraaj Party in the fray as well.

For 19-year-old Shruti Mishra, who also cast her vote for the first time, said education and healthcare should be among the top priorities.

A student of the philosophy department of Patna Women's College, she pointed towards the heaps of garbage in the streets in her constituency, Kumhrar, and hankered for an MLA who works for development, education, affordable healthcare, and cleanliness.

Shivam, a millennial, and Bhavya, a Gen Z member, argued that "law and order situation here is better" than "what we have heard about" from elders and "in media reports", as it was 20 years ago.

Senior leaders of the BJP, key constituent of the ruling NDA in Bihar with JD(U), and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in their election speeches during the campaigns, attacked the RJD, part of the Opposition's INDIA bloc, over the alleged "jungle raj" in Bihar in the 1990s.

RJD and INDIA bloc's CM candidate Tejashwi Yadav have countered the charges, saying the law and order situation has worsened under the Nitish Kumar government in the last two decades.

Shivam said any reasonable youth should "do one's own research and reading from unbiased sources" to check whenever an allegation is levelled against anyone by political leaders.

"To vote for someone just because, someone is raising a bogey of the past, will not be a wise step," he said.

Both main contestants, the NDA and the INDIA bloc, have made a slew of promises in their manifestos, from education to industry and healthcare to other sectors.

The 'Mahagathbandhan' has said that a law will be enacted to provide government jobs to one member of each family in the state within 20 days of the formation of the INDIA bloc government.

In late October, Tejashwi had told reporters in Patna that their coalition would bring a government of "padhai, dawai, kamai (education, healthcare and jobs)" and "sunwai and karwai (listening to grievances and taking actions)".

Elections to the 121 seats of the 243-member assembly were held on Thursday, while the remaining 122 constituencies will go to polls on 11 November. The counting of votes will be held on 14 November. *—PTI*

LETTERS

write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈا

COP30: 53 nations endorse funds for forest protection

World leaders gathered at the COP30 Leaders' Summit in Belém, Brazil, to launch the Tropical Forests Forever Facility, a landmark global initiative aimed at channelling large-scale finance into the protection of tropical forests.

The Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) is designed to reward countries for keeping their forests standing rather than waiting for them to be cut down or degraded.

According to the launch statement, it has been endorsed by 53 countries.

The host country, Brazil, described the move on Thursday as a turning point in global environmental finance and one of the most important deliverables of this year's UN climate conference.

It creates a system of regular, performance-based payments to tropical forest nations that successfully maintain their forest cover, verified through monitoring tools such as satellites.

The goal is to shift the financial incentives in favour of conservation and to recognise the immense ecosystem services provided by tropical forests, from carbon storage and rainfall regulation to biodiversity protection.

Led by Brazil, the facility represents a new model of climate finance that blends public, private, and sovereign capital.

The structure consists of a secretariat, also called the TFFF, and an investment fund known as the Tropical Forest Investment Fund (TFIF).

The TFIF will invest sponsor contributions in emerging market bonds and other sustainable assets that exclude fossil fuels and sectors linked to deforestation.

Returns from these investments will be used to repay investors while generating funds to reward participating countries.

- The Tropical Forests Forever Facility (TFFF) is designed to reward countries for keeping their forests standing rather than waiting for them to be cut down or degraded.

At least 20 per cent of all funds will directly reach Indigenous peoples and local communities, acknowledging their central role in forest protection and addressing the historical gap in conservation financing that rarely reaches them.

Of the 53 countries that have endorsed TFFF, 34 are tropical forest nations representing more than 90 per cent of the world's tropical forests in developing countries, including Indonesia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and China.

India, a tropical forest country, is yet to formally endorse the initiative.

Norway announced a commitment of around USD 3 billion over the next 10 years. Brazil and Indonesia reconfirmed their earlier pledges of USD 1 billion each, while Portugal committed USD 1 million.

France said it would consider contributing up to USD 576 million by 2030.

The Netherlands pledged USD 5 million to support the secretariat, and Germany fully endorsed the initiative.Several other countries, including France, China, and the UAE, expressed political support but have yet to make financial commitments.

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, opening the high-level event, called the launch "an unprecedented initiative" and said for the first time in history, countries of the Global South would take a leading role in a forest agenda.

He said the initiative's launch in the heart of the Amazon rainforest carried deep symbolism and added that in the coming years, the world would begin to see the tangible results of the fund.

Lula said the TFFF would be one of the main outcomes in the spirit of COP30 implementation.

The two-day Leaders' Summit will set the political direction for COP30, which marks a decade since the Paris Agreement.

COP30 is taking place — between 10 and 21 November — amid heightened geopolitical tensions, ongoing wars, and economic uncertainty triggered by US tariffs.

The United States' withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, along with several developed countries re-evaluating their climate commitments amid economic and energy security concerns, has created a challenging backdrop for this year's climate talks. *—PTI*

COP30 is taking place between 10 and 21 November

PHOTO: PTI

Vande Mataram: History of discontent over India's national song

"Vande Mataram", the national song tugging at the heartstrings of many an Indian, has stirred heated debates every few years over its "secular" or "anti-Islamic" nature and the role it played in India's freedom struggle.

On Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said important stanzas of the national song "Vande Mataram" were dropped in 1937 which sowed the seeds of partition and asserted that such a "divisive mindset" is still a challenge for the country. Modi made the comments while inaugurating the yearlong commemoration of "Vande Mataram" to mark 150 years of the national song. It all began in 1875 when Bengali novelist-poet Bankim Chandra Chatterjee wrote an ode to the motherland as a personification of Goddess Kali. Since then, the poem, dedicated to Bengal, has time and again found itself in the proverbial eye of the political storm.

However, it was published only seven years later in 1882 in the literary journal "Bangadarshan" as part of Chatterjee's novel "Anandamath" set in the backdrop of the sanyasi rebellion and the Great Bengal Famine of 1770.

Over the next decade, till the 1900s, "Vande Mataram", translating to "I bow to you, mother", became a rebellious call against the British and one popularised by nationalistic leaders of the Indian National Congress.

The original "Bande Mataram" - there is no 'V' sound in Bengali - is a poem in six stanzas. It has strong religious lyrics in the later parts, evoking the imagery of and paying obeisance to goddesses Durga and Lakshmi. The poem, especially the first two words, "Vande Mataram", gradually became the slogan of the nationalist movement. In 1937, the Muslim League in a resolution adopted in its 25th session in Lucknow dubbed "Vande Mataram" as "not merely positively anti-Islamic and idolatrous in its inspiration and ideas, but definitely subversive of the growth of genuine nationalism in India".

Days later, the Congress Working Committee, which met at Calcutta on 26 October, 1937, under the presidentship of Nehru, also adopted a resolution on the subject. It noted that "wherever Bande Mataram is sung at national gatherings, only the first two stanzas should be sung, with perfect freedom to the organisers to sing any other song of an unobjectionable character, in addition to, or in the place of, the Bande Mataram song".

The poem, especially the first two words, "Vande Mataram", gradually became the slogan of the nationalist movement

PHOTO: PTI

On 24 January, 1950, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted "Vande Mataram" as the national song. According to a 1953 publication by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, it was first sung at a political occasion at the 1896 session of the Indian National Congress and set to music by Rabindranath Tagore.

The song gradually adapted the essence of an anthem as the anti-partition movement in Bengal grew in the early 1900s. It was during these days that Muslim leaders showed early protest to the popular use of the poem. In his presidential address to the second session of the All-India Muslim League held at Amritsar on 30 December, 1908, league leader Syed Ali Imam said his "heart is filled with despair and disappointment" when "the most advanced province of India put forward the sectarian cry of 'Bande Mataram' as the national cry".

"...and the suspicion that, under the cloak of nationalism, Hindu nationalism is preached in India becomes a conviction," he said. Mahatma Gandhi, who associated "the purest national spirit with it", admitted that "Vande Mataram" had "gripped and enthralled" him, but it never occurred to him that it was "a Hindu song or meant only for Hindus". "I would not risk a single quarrel over singing 'Vande Mataram' at a mixed gathering. It will never suffer from disuse.

It is enthroned in the hearts of millions. It stirs to its depths the patriotism of millions in and outside Bengal. Its chosen stanzas are Bengal's gift among many others to the whole nation," he wrote in "Harijan" on 1 July, 1939.

Even after Independence, Gandhi counselled against the imposition of "Vande Mataram".

Over the next eight decades, the debate over the national song has been intense. One of the biggest controversies occurred in 2009, when Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind in Deoband, Uttar Pradesh, issued a fatwa asking Muslims not to sing the national song. "We love our country and have proved this several times, but 'Vande Mataram' violates our faith in monotheism that is the foundation of our faith. We can love and serve our country, but cannot elevate it to the status of Allah, the only one worshipped by Muslims," it said. Strongly opposing the Islamic organisation, over 100 Muslim scholars, social activists, actors, and writers released a statement and said the debate on "Vande Mataram" was settled in the 1930s with the consent of the then leadership of the Jamiat.

"We neither believe that the Vande Mataram is a test case of someone's patriotism nor do we agree with the Jamiat interpretation that reciting the song would endanger one's faith.

Therefore, we strongly condemn the Jamiat move to unnecessarily provoke a controversy around Vande Mataram at this juncture," the statement added. It was signed by the likes of Naseeruddin Shah, Javed Akhtar, Shabana Azmi and Saeed Akhtar Mirza. *—PTI*

US conducts 17th strike on 'drug' boat, kills 3

WASHINGTON, 7 NOV

Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth announced on Thursday that the United States conducted another strike on a vessel allegedly trafficking narcotics in the Caribbean, resulting in three fatalities. This attack increases the death toll from the Trump administration's military campaign to at least 69 across 17 strikes. Hegseth shared footage of the operation on social media, stating, "Vessel strikes on narco-terrorists will continue until their ... poisoning of the American people stops." Trump argued these actions are part of an "armed conflict" against drug cartels, though the administration has yet to provide evidence. Congressional reactions varied, with Republicans supporting the strikes while Democrats called for more oversight. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

Mamdani's 1st strategic stop is at Puerto Rico

SAN JUAN, 7 NOV

New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani on Thursday made a triumphant trip to Puerto Rico for an annual summit that brings New York politicians and lobbyists to sunny San Juan for strategy meetings and boozy confabs. Fresh off his election win, Mamdani was greeted by a cheering beachfront crowd at the Somos conference, where he promised them he would fight for working people. His Democratic ally, New York Attorney General Letitia James, exhorted the crowd to sing "Mamdani, whoa-oh-oh-oh" to the tune of old standard, 'Volare'. The conference is something of a post-Election Day retreat for the state's political movers and shakers at a Hilton hotel in San Juan. *—PTI*

'Stranger Things' co-creators dismiss bullying claims

LOS ANGELES, 7 NOV

'Stranger Things' stars Millie Bobby Brown and David Harbour were all smiles as they posed for the cameras during a promotional event for the series just days after a report claimed that the actor, who plays Eleven in the series, had levelled bullying allegations against Harbour. Now co-creator Ross Duffer and director Shawn Levy have dismissed the claim, adding that the cast is more like a family that has been together for 10 years, according to the Hollywood Reporter. Director and executive producer Shawn Levy said they ensure that everyone feels safe on the sets of the series. Netflix or the representatives for Brown and Harbour have not commented. *—PTI*

PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA

British actress Pauline Collins dies at 85

LONDON, 7 NOV

Pauline Collins, famed for her iconic role as Shirley Valentine, has died at the age of 85 after battling Parkinson's disease. Her family announced her peaceful passing this week in a north London care home. Renowned for her authenticity, Collins achieved fame through numerous television, film, and theatre roles, notably in the hit series "Upstairs Downstairs" and the award-winning play "Shirley Valentine." Her portrayal of a woman rediscovering herself in Greece garnered an Academy Award nomination in 1990. Collins leaves a profound impact on British theatre and film. *—PTI*

Judge orders Trump govt to fund SNAP food benefits for Nov

'42 million Americans have gone for too long without food benefits'

WASHINGTON, 7 NOV

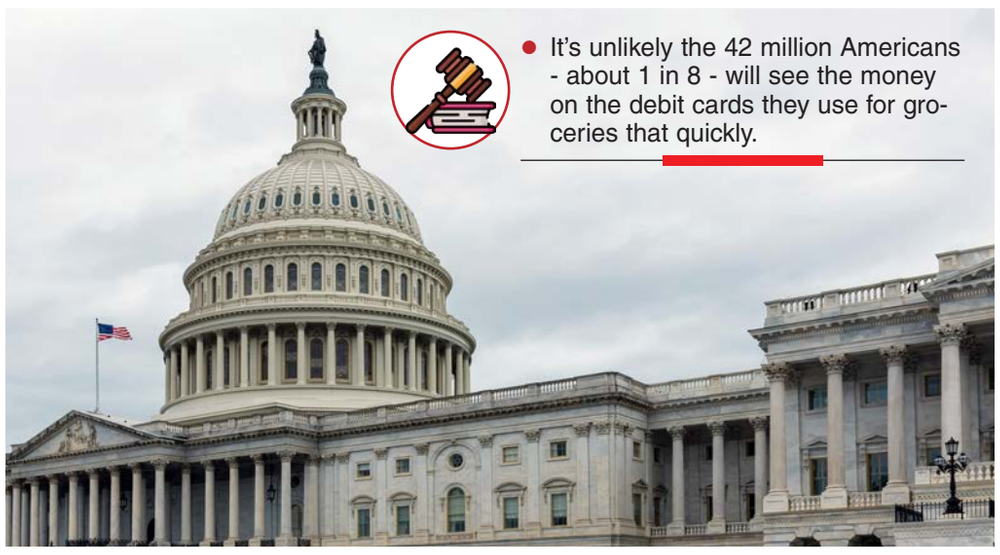
A federal judge in Rhode Island on Thursday ordered the Trump administration to find the money to fully fund SNAP food aid benefits for November.

The ruling by US District Judge John J McConnell Jr gave President Donald Trump's administration until Friday to make the payments through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programme (SNAP), though it's unlikely the 42 million Americans -- about 1 in 8 -- will see the money on the debit cards they use for groceries that quickly.

The order came in response to a challenge from cities and nonprofits complaining that the administration was only offering to cover 65 per cent of the maximum benefit, a decision that would leave some recipients getting nothing for this month.

"The defendants failed to consider the practical consequences associated with this decision to only partially fund SNAP," McConnell said. "They knew that there would be a long delay in paying partial SNAP payments and failed to consider the harms individuals who rely on those benefits would suffer."

"People have gone without for too long," McConnell said.



- It's unlikely the 42 million Americans - about 1 in 8 - will see the money on the debit cards they use for groceries that quickly.

McConnell was one of two judges who ruled last week that the administration could not skip November's benefits entirely because of the federal shutdown.

Last week's rulings ordered the government to use one emergency reserve fund containing USD 4.6 billion to pay for SNAP for November but gave it leeway to tap other money to make the full payments, which cost between USD 8.5 billion and USD 9 billion each month.

DON HOSTS ASIAN LEADERS

Trump hosted leaders of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan on Thursday as he intensifies his hunt for rare earth metals and circumvent China's dominance over the precious resource.

"These nations were once home to the ancient Silk Road connecting East and West," Trump said. "Sadly, previous American Presidents neglected this region completely... (But) I understand the importance of this region." *—PTI*

QUOTE of THE DAY

The retirement of (Speaker) Nancy Pelosi is a great thing for America. She was evil, corrupt, and only focused on bad things for our country

—Donald Trump US President. 87-year-old Pelosi announced her retirement on Thursday and said that she would not stand for re-election.

LGBTQ+ don't need passport sex markers: SC

The Supreme Court on Thursday allowed Trump's administration to enforce a policy blocking transgender and nonbinary people from choosing passport sex markers that align with their gender identity. "Displaying passport holders' sex at birth no more offends equal protection principles than displaying their country of birth," it said.

Many US flights cancelled amid record shutdown

WASHINGTON, 7 NOV

Hundreds of flights were cancelled across the United States on Thursday after the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) ordered airlines to cut traffic at 40 major airports starting Friday amid the ongoing government shutdown.

Nearly 500 flights scheduled for Friday were already cancelled, and the number continued to climb throughout the day, according to FlightAware. The FAA directed airlines to reduce service by 10 per cent at "high-volume" airports including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Atlanta, Denver, Miami and San Francisco. The move aims to maintain air-travel safety as air traffic controllers, who have been working unpaid since 1 October, report exhaustion and rising absenteeism.

United Airlines said it would trim 4 per cent of weekend flights, while other carriers plan similar reductions. The cuts could affect as many as 1,800 flights and up to 2,68,000 passengers daily.

Airlines have pledged refunds for affected travellers, while industry groups warned that the indefinite flight reductions, coming weeks before the holiday season, would severely strain air travel and delay cargo shipments from hubs in Louisville and Memphis. *—PTI*

Debris on a road outside the Hilton Hotel, which was set on fire by protesters amid the recent violent protest against the government over alleged corruption, in Kathmandu **PHOTO: ANI**

Nepal's youth want 'new faces on ballot papers'

KATHMANDU, 7 NOV

- The Election Commission resumed voter registration to update the roll and include the younger generation on 26 September. It will conclude on 16 November

With four months remaining for Nepal to head to the polls after the September Gen Z protests, youth of the Himalayan nation want "new faces on the ballot papers and in the parliament".

The Election Commission resumed voter registration to update the roll and include the younger generation on 26 September. It will conclude on 16 November.

With Parliament already dissolved, Nepal has seen an enthusiastically high number of new voters with more than 1,30,000 new voters enrolled in the poll roll update within the last 42 days, with elections set to be conducted on 5 March, 2025, as recommended by Interim Prime Minister Sushila Karki.

Younger voters are hoping for a more "democratic" election, to result in a more "inclusive" government.

"Before the Gen Z revolution we have seen the (KP Sharma Oli led) government, it was kind of authoritarian and was not inclusive," Avash Subedi, a student activist said.

Many hope to see a new wave of politicians leading the political sphere.

"I believe that the youths are supposed to lead the upcoming election by adding their own party," Khushi Joshi, another student leader said.

The registration of political parties increased. As per the electoral body, 125 political parties have already been registered, with the number expected to increase. *—ANI*

Pak to give military more power with 27th Amendment

ISLAMABAD, 7 NOV

Pakistan plans to create a new position of the "Commander of Defence Forces" (CDF), as part of key defence reforms to ensure greater coordination and unified command among the three services, a media report said on Friday.

The new CDF designation is being considered under the proposed amendment to Article 243, The News reported. Article 243 states that "the Federal government shall have control and command of the Armed Forces" and "the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces shall vest in the President", among other things.

The move is said to have been inspired by lessons drawn from the four-day conflict between Pakistan and India in May and the evolving nature of modern warfare that demands integrated operational response.

In response to the 22 April Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan.

India has been maintaining that Pakistan pleaded for ending the hostilities in May after India pounded Pakistani military infrastructure. *—PTI*

The agreement comes more than a week after the RSF seized el-Fasher city after sieging it for over 18 months **PHOTO: X**

Paramilitary RSF agrees to Quad truce

CAIRO, 6 NOV

The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) said Thursday it has agreed to a humanitarian truce in Sudan proposed by a US-led mediator group known as the Quad.

The agreement comes more than a week after the RSF seized el-Fasher city after sieging it for over 18 months. It was also the last Sudanese military stronghold in Sudan's western Darfur region.

A Sudan military official said the army welcomes the Quad's proposal but will only agree to a truce when the RSF withdraws from civilian areas and give up weapons.

Thousands have been killed in the war that began in 2023. WHO places the death toll at 40,000, with 12 million people displaced, but aid groups believe the actual figure is multiple times higher. At least 24 people are also facing acute food insecurity, in the world's largest humanitarian crisis.

The US has been working with Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates — the Quad — on ways to end the war. Notably, the UAE is accused of funding the RSF.

Meanwhile, the International Criminal Court of Justice is beginning an investigation into the alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the takeover of el-Fasher. *—PTI*

White powder at US military base makes soldiers ill

MARYLAND, 6 NOV

The US military base in Maryland witnessed a strange event where many fell ill, leading to hospitalisation, after a suspicious envelope containing unknown white powder was delivered, said sources. According to a report by CNN, the Joint Base Andrews (JBA), in its statement, said that after someone opened the envelope, the building and the one connecting to it were evacuated as a precaution, and the surroundings were guarded. Many people were affected by the white powder and taken to the base's Malcolm Grove Medical Centre, sources said, adding that the specifications of the illness are still unidentified.

According to sources, JBA first responders who were dispatched to the site of the incident stated that no immediate threat was found and that they did not discover any hazardous objects. It said that the case was handed over to the Office of Special Investigations.

The investigation is ongoing, it added.

The JBA is widely known as the home base for Air Force One aircraft, which is used by the President of the US, said sources. *— Agencies*

CHINA'S LATEST FLEX

China commissioned its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, on Friday, further enhancing its naval capabilities. This is China's first domestically made carrier. Experts believe Fujian enables China to extend its naval reach beyond its coastal waters, essential for competing with the US **PHOTO: XINHUA**

2-YR BAN OVER FUKUSHIMA WASTEWATER

Japan resumes seafood exports to China

TOKYO, 7 NOV

Japan resumed its seafood exports on Friday for the first time since China banned the discharge of treated radioactive wastewater from the tsunami-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in August 2023.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told reporters that 6 metric tonnes of scallops harvested in Hokkaido were shipped to China on Wednesday.

Beijing announced in June that it would ease the ban and resume imports, following repeated negotiations between the two sides.

The ban was a major blow to Japan's seafood industry, especially scallop and seafood cucumber exports. China was the biggest overseas market for Japanese seafood.

China is the biggest overseas market for Japanese seafood **PHOTO: X**

A ban remains in place for seafood from Fukushima and nine nearby prefectures, which China imposed after the plant's meltdowns. Kihara said Japan will also continue to urge Beijing to lift the remaining bans and resume importing Japanese beef.

The Fukushima Daiichi plant suffered triple meltdowns following a massive earthquake and tsunami in 2011, causing leaks of massive radioactive wastewater that need to be stored in tanks.

The utility won Japanese government approval and support from the International Atomic Energy Agency for the release of the water into the sea after treatment. Japanese officials said the wastewater would be much safer than international standards and the IAEA comprehensive report confirmed it. *—PTI*

5 KILLED AS TYPHOON KALMAEGI DEVASTATES VIETNAM

DAK LAK, 7 NOV

Typhoon Kalmaegi unleashed severe winds and torrential rain across central Vietnam on Friday, resulting in at least five fatalities and widespread destruction. Local reports said at least three deaths occurred in Dak Lak province and two in Gia Lai, with three still missing in Quang Ngai. The storm injured six others and damaged 2,600 homes, with 52 destroyed and over 1.6 million households left without power.

The storm previously struck the Philippines, where it has left at least 188 dead and 135 missing, prompting President Ferdinand Marcos Jr to declare a national emergency. Meanwhile, Typhoon Fungwong, expected to impact Manila, looms on the horizon.

Fallen trees on a sidewalk in Dak Lak, Vietnam, Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Central Vietnam was grappling with flooding prior to Kalmaegi. The threat of landslides, with nearly 537,000 evacuated. Meteorologists predicted that the storm could bring up to 24 inches of rain in some areas before moving into Laos and northeastern Thailand on Friday. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Gold prices fall by Rs 100 to Rs 1.24 lakh/10g

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Gold prices fell Rs 100 to Rs 1,24,600 per 10g in the national capital on Friday due to fresh selling by jewellers and stockists, according to the All India Sarafa Association. The precious metal of 99.5 per cent purity slipped Rs 100 to Rs 1,24,000 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes) from Thursday's closing of Rs 1,24,100. In the local bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity had settled at Rs 1,24,700 per 10g in the previous market session. However, silver prices remained flat at Rs 1,53,300 per kilogram, inclusive of all taxes, on Friday. Globally, spot gold rose USD 19.84, or 0.5 per cent, to USD 3,996.93 per ounce while spot silver was trading 0.96 per cent higher at USD 48.48 an ounce. *—PTI*

Rupee slips by 2P to settle at 88.65 against USD

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

The rupee slipped 2 paise to 88.65 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday amid a strong American currency against major crosses overseas and rising crude oil prices. A weak trend in domestic equity markets also weighed on the domestic currency, forex traders said. At the interbank foreign exchange, the rupee opened at 88.61 and tumbled to the intraday low of 88.72 against the greenback. The unit ended the session at 88.65 (provisional), registering a loss of 2 paise from its previous closing level. The rupee weakened on risk-off sentiments in the global market and a strong US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.14 per cent to 99.72. *—PTI*

PFC Q2 net profit rises by 9% to Rs 7,834 crore

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

State-owned Power Finance Corporation on Friday posted a nearly 9 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 7,834.39 crore in the September quarter compared to a year ago, mainly on the back of higher revenues. The company had a consolidated net profit of Rs 7,214.90 crore in the quarter ended on September 30, 2024, according to a regulatory filing. Total income rose to Rs 28,901.22 crore in the quarter. The board also declared an interim dividend of Rs 3.65 per share, taking the cumulative interim dividend to Rs 7.35 per share. Consolidated net worth, including non-controlling interest, increased by 15 per cent to Rs 1,66,821 crore as on 30 September, 2025. *—PTI*

Apple to unveil burgundy iPhone 18 Pro in 2026

SEOUL, 7 NOV

Apple is reportedly preparing a new burgundy finish for its upcoming iPhone 18 Pro lineup, marking the latest in its 'premium colour' series. Following the success of the Cosmic Orange iPhone 17 Pro, the company aims to reinforce its luxury image through bold design differentiation, according to Pulse, the English service of Maeil Business News Korea. Prototype production of the burgundy variant began this week, with internal feedback describing it as "deep and elegant, complementing titanium's metallic texture." Apple is also testing coffee and purple shades, though final selections will depend on colour consistency and production efficiency. Distinctive colours have become central to Apple's marketing, with past models featuring hues like Sierra Blue and Deep Purple. The iPhone 18 lineup, expected in September 2026. *—ANI*

Tesla approve Musk's $1 trillion pay deal

The largest executive pay deal in human history

TEXAS, 7 NOV

Tesla shareholders have approved a massive pay package for CEO **Elon Musk** that could make him the world's first trillionaire if the company meets ambitious growth targets, CNN reported.

At Tesla's annual shareholder meeting on Thursday, more than 75 per cent of shareholders voted in favour of Musk's stock-based compensation plan, excluding the 15 per cent stake he already owns. The room erupted in cheers and chants as the results were announced.

"I super appreciate it," Musk told shareholders after the vote, thanking them and Tesla's board for their support, as per CNN.

Unlike most CEOs, Musk does not take a salary. His compensation comes entirely through stock options, and this new package could grant him up to 423.7 million Tesla shares over the next decade, a potential payout worth around $1 trillion if the company hits a market value of $8.5 trillion.

That target would require Tesla's stock price to rise by 466 per cent from its current level, a feat that would make it more valuable than Nvidia, currently the world's largest company at $5 trillion.

If Musk secures all 12 tranches of the stock award, the earnings would equal $275 million per day, the largest executive pay deal ever recorded.

Tesla's board had warned shareholders that rejecting the pay plan could prompt Musk to walk away from the company. In a regulatory filing, the board said Musk had raised concerns about continuing as CEO without greater assurances of control that the pay package could grant him.

Despite the approval, Tesla is facing a challenging year.

The company's sales and profits have dropped sharply in 2025 amid slower EV demand and reduced US government incentives for electric vehicles, CNN reported. *—ANI*

TO MATCH INT'L LEVEL

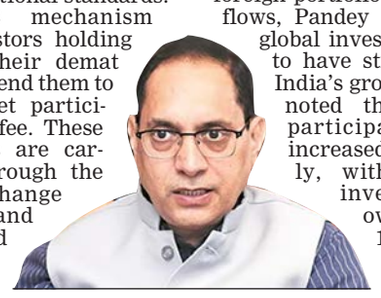
Sebi to review short selling, SLB rules

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Markets regulator SEBI will soon form a working group to undertake a comprehensive review of the frameworks governing short selling and the Securities Lending and Borrowing (SLB) mechanism, Chairman **Tuhin Kanta Pandey** announced on Friday.

Speaking at the CNBC-TV18 Global Leadership Summit, Pandey said the short selling framework, introduced in 2007, and the SLB mechanism, rolled out in 2008, have largely remained unchanged and now require an in-depth reassessment to bring them in line with international standards.

The SLB mechanism allows investors holding shares in their demat accounts to lend them to other market participants for a fee. These transactions are carried out through the stock exchange platform and guaranteed by the clearing corporation, ensuring smooth and secure settlements. Experts note that borrowers typically use these securities for short selling or to avoid settlement failures. The framework not only enables lenders to earn additional income on idle shares but also enhances liquidity and overall market efficiency.



Pandey also said SEBI is conducting comprehensive reviews of stockbroker and mutual fund regulations and will next focus on the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) 2015 and settlement norms.

Addressing concerns about foreign portfolio investor outflows, Pandey stressed that global investors continue to have strong faith in India's growth story. He noted that domestic participation has increased significantly, with individual investors now owning about 18 per cent of listed companies. *—PTI*

Swiggy's board approves fundraising up to ₹10,000 crore

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Swiggy on Friday said its board has approved the raising of funds upto Rs 10,000 crore in one or more tranches through the Qualified Institutional Placement (QIP) route or any other permitted modes, as it seeks to bolster growth capital in a competitive environment.

In a regulatory filing, Swiggy informed that its board of directors at its meeting held on 7 November has "approved the raising of funds by way of public or private offerings including, through one or more tranches, by way of QIP or any other permitted modes ... to the eligible investors as may be permitted, for an aggregate amount of upto Rs 10,000 crore, subject to the receipt of necessary approvals".

Swiggy, which owns food delivery and quick commerce businesses, had recently said that the external environment is competitive and dynamic, and hence the company's board will consider raising additional funds. *—PTI*

Singtel sells 0.8% share in Airtel for ₹10,353 cr

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Singapore Telecommunications Ltd (Singtel) on Friday sold a 0.8 per cent stake in Bharti Airtel for Rs 10,353 crore (SGD 1.5 billion), continuing its strategy to actively streamline its portfolio through asset recycling. Post-sale, Singtel holds a 27.5 per cent stake in Airtel, valued at about SGD 51 billion (Rs 3.46 lakh crore).

The shares were sold via private placement to institutional investors, reflecting robust demand and market confidence in Airtel. The deal is expected to yield a gain of about SGD 1.1 billion, Singtel said in a filing to the Singapore Exchange (SGX).

Arthur Lang, Singtel's Group CFO, said the company has been working with Bharti Enterprises to gradually equalise their effective stakes in Airtel. "These transactions allow us to unlock value when appropriate, retain a significant interest in Airtel, and stay invested in India's growing digital economy," he said.

Lang added that the capital management programme has so far generated SGD 5.6 billion, surpassing half of Singtel's new SGD 9 billion mid-term asset recycling target. Proceeds will support balance sheet strengthening, digital infrastructure expansion, and sustainable dividend growth.

Separately, Airtel reported a 2x rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 8,651 crore in Q2 FY26, driven by high-value smartphone and postpaid users. Revenue rose 26 per cent year-on-year to Rs 52,145 crore. Airtel shares fell 4.5 per cent to Rs 1,509.40 on the NSE. *—PTI*

Groww's Rs 6,632 crore IPO gets subscribed 17.60 times on last day

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The initial public offer of Billionbrains Garage Ventures, the parent company of stock broking firm Groww, received 17.60 times subscription on the final day of the share sale on Friday.

The company's Rs 6,632 crore IPO received bids for 6,41,86,96,200 shares against 36,47,76,528 shares on offer, according to details available with the NSE.

The qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) portion fetched 22.02 times subscription. The category for non-institutional investors received 14.20 times subscription, and that of retail individual investors (RIIs) got subscribed 9.43 times.

Billionbrains Garage Ventures on Monday garnered a little over Rs 2,984 crore from anchor investors.

The firm has fixed a price band of Rs 95-100 per share for its IPO, targeting a valuation of over Rs 61,700 crore (about USD 7 billion).

Headquartered in Bengaluru, Groww filed draft papers in May with markets regulator Sebi for an IPO through a confidential pre-filing route and received Sebi's approval in August. Groww will make its market debut on 12 November.

TENNECO TARGETS RS 16,000 CRORE

Tenneco Clean Air India Ltd, part of the US-headquartered Tenneco Group, has announced a price band of Rs 378–Rs 397 per share for its upcoming Initial Public Offering (IPO), targeting a valuation of over Rs 16,000 crore at the upper end.

The Rs 3,600-crore IPO will open for public subscription on 12 November and close on 14 November, with anchor investors allocated shares on 11 November. The issue is entirely an Offer for Sale (OFS) by promoter Tenneco Mauritius Holdings Ltd, meaning the company will not receive any proceeds, as all funds will go to the selling shareholder. The objective of the IPO is to achieve the benefits of listing. *—PTI*

STUDDS ACCESSORIES MAKE MUTED MKT DEBUT

Shares of helmet manufacturer Studds Accessories Ltd on Friday ended with a discount of over 4 per cent against the issue price of Rs 585. On the BSE, shares of the firm ended at Rs 560.45, a decline of 4.19 per cent. At the NSE, the stock ended at Rs 560.30, lower by 4.22 per cent. The company's market valuation stood at Rs 2,205.56 crore. *—PTI*

Auto retail sales hit record high of 21% this festive season

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

India's automobile retail sector recorded a 21 per cent year-on-year rise during the 42-day festive season, driven by record passenger vehicle and two-wheeler sales and aided by GST 2.0 tax reforms that lowered prices across segments, according to the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

Total retail sales reached 52.38 lakh units, up from 43.25 lakh last year, marking the industry's strongest festive performance to date. Passenger vehicle registrations grew 23 per cent to 7.67 lakh units, while two-wheeler sales rose 22 per cent to 40.52 lakh units, boosted by improved rural sentiment, stronger liquidity, and enhanced affordability under the revised GST structure.

FADA President CS Vigneshwar said the GST 2.0 initiative had become a "catalyst for consumer-led growth," with compact and sub-4-metre cars witnessing renewed demand. *—PTI*

Markets decline for 3rd straight day

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

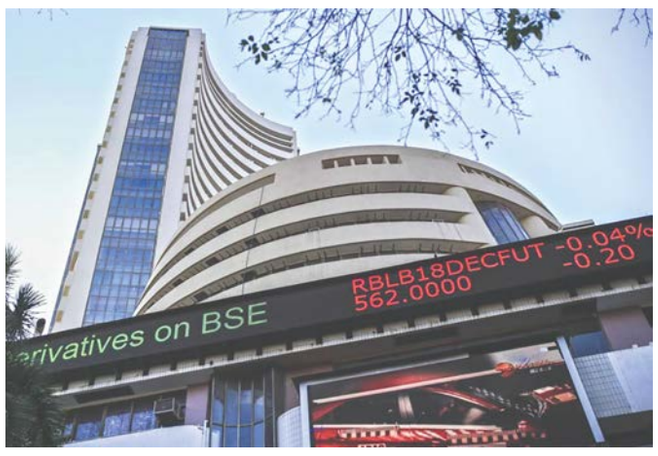
Falling for the third straight day, benchmark index Sensex declined by nearly 95 points while Nifty slipped below 25,500 on Friday as relentless foreign fund outflows and weak trends in global markets hit investors' sentiment.

The 30-share BSE Sensex declined 94.73 points, or 0.11 per cent, to settle at 83,216.28. During the day, it tanked 640.06 points, or 0.76 per cent, to 82,670.95.

The 50-share NSE Nifty dipped 17.40 points, or 0.07 per cent, to 25,492.30.

Among Sensex firms, Bharti Airtel tumbled 4.46 per cent after Singtel said it has sold about 0.8 per cent stake in the firm for Rs 10,353 crore (SGD 1.5 billion).

Tech Mahindra, Trent, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, Hindustan Unilever, and ITC were also among the laggards.



However, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel, Mahindra & Mahindra, and Bajaj Finserv were among the gainers.

The BSE midcap gauge went up by 0.25 per cent, while smallcap ended marginally lower by 0.01 per cent.

In a holiday-shortened week, the BSE benchmark tanked 722.43 points or 0.86 per cent, and the Nifty declined 229.8 points or 0.89 per cent,.

A total of 2,105 stocks declined while 2,069 advanced and 141 remained unchanged on the BSE. *—PTI*

INDIA, NZ CONCLUDE 4TH ROUND OF TRADE TALKS

ROTORUA, 7 NOV

India and New Zealand have completed the fourth round of negotiations for their proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA), pledging to work towards its swift conclusion.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met New Zealand's Trade Minister Todd McClay to review progress.

Talks focused on goods market access, services, investment, and economic and technical cooperation.

"We aim for an early conclusion of a balanced, comprehensive and mutually beneficial agreement, reflecting the growing strategic and economic convergence between our nations," Goyal said.

During his three-day visit, Goyal met several business leaders, including Valocity CEO Carmen Vicelich, Slumberzone CEO Ranjay Sikka, and Meat Industry Association Chairman Nathan Guy, to explore trade and investment opportunities in sectors such as agriculture, tourism, technology, education, gaming, and drone innovation.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal met New Zealand's Trade Minister Todd McClay to review progress **PHOTO: PTI**

The commerce ministry identified space collaboration as another promising area, citing India's recent lunar missions.

Bilateral trade between India and New Zealand reached USD 1.3 billion in 2024–25, up 49 per cent from the previous year, underscoring growing economic ties between the two Indo-Pacific partners. *—PTI*

SUICIDE & DELUSIONS

7 cases against OpenAI for causing deaths

SAN FRANCISCO, 7 NOV

OpenAI is facing seven lawsuits claiming ChatGPT drove people to suicide and harmful delusions even when they had no prior mental health issues.

The lawsuits filed on Thursday in California state courts allege wrongful death, assisted suicide, involuntary manslaughter and negligence.

Filed on behalf of six adults and one teenager by the Social Media Victims Law Center and Tech Justice Law Project, the lawsuits claim that OpenAI knowingly released GPT-4o prematurely, despite internal warnings that it was dangerously sycophantic and psychologically manipulative. Four of the victims died by suicide.

The teenager, 17-year-old Amaurie Lacey, began using ChatGPT for help, according to the lawsuit filed in San Francisco Superior Court.

OpenAI CEO Sam Altman **PHOTO: ANI**

But instead of helping, "the defective and inherently dangerous ChatGPT product caused addiction, depression, and, eventually, counselled him on the most effective way to tie a noose and how long he would be able to 'live without breathing'."

OpenAI is yet to respond.

Another lawsuit, filed by Alan Brooks, a 48-year-old in Ontario, Canada, claims that for more than two years, ChatGPT worked as a "resource tool" for Brooks.

Then, without warning, it changed, preying on his vulnerabilities and "manipulating, and inducing him to experience delusions." It resulted in devastating financial, reputational, and emotional harm for him.

"These lawsuits are about accountability for a product that was designed to blur the line between tool and companion all in the name of increasing user engagement and market share," Matthew P Bergman, founding attorney of the Social Media Victims Law Centre, said in a statement.

OpenAI, he added, "designed GPT-4o to emotionally entangle users."

In August, parents of 16-year-old Adam Raine sued OpenAI and its CEO Sam Altman, alleging that ChatGPT coached the California boy in planning and taking his own life earlier this year. *—PTI*

BHEL bags Rs 6,650 cr order for thermal plant

NW DELHI, 7 NOV

State-owned engineering firm Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) on Friday said that it has secured an order worth Rs 6,650 core from NTPC Ltd for setting up an 800-MW unit at Darlipali Supercritical Thermal Power Project Stage-II in Sundargarh district, Odisha. "BHEL has received a notification of award from NTPC Ltd for 1x800 MW Darlipali STPP, Stage-II," a filing said. The nature of the order is engineering, procurement and construction works including design, engineering, supply of equipment along with erection & commissioning and civil works. Broad consideration or size of the order is over Rs 6,650 crore excluding GST, it said. About the time frame for completion of the order, it stated that the completion of work is expected in 48 months from the date of notification of award. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X/@CPJ MENA

Rathika Seelan enters NSW Open Squash semifinals

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

India's Rathika Suthanthira Seelan progressed to the semifinals of the NSW Open Squash tournament with a straight-game win over local challenger Karen Bloom in Sydney on Friday. The 24-year-old Chennai player, who is seeded second, beat Karen 11-8, 11-7, 11-4 in 22 minutes in the quarterfinals of the PSA Challenger event. Meanwhile, fifth seed Veer Chotrani beat Egypt's Mohamed Sharaf 11-7, 10-12, 11-5, 11-8 in the round-of-16 at the St James Expression Open, a USD 32,000 PSA Copper event, in Springfield (US). —*PTI*

Uthappa shines as India beat Pak by 2 runs

HONG KONG, 7 NOV

Former India cricketer Robin Uthappa and Bharat Chipli played blazing knocks as India defeated Pakistan by two runs via the DLS Method in a rain-affected Pool C match of the Hong Kong Sixes, here on Friday. Uthappa smashed a quick-fire 28 off 11 balls and Chipli struck 24 (13b) as India posted 86/4 in six overs. Pakistan began the chase well, reaching 41/1 after three overs before heavy rain halted play. Once play was called off, the DLS calculation left Pakistan two runs short of the par score. Stuart Binny's economical spell, where he conceded seven runs and took a wicket, proved to be the difference. In Pool B, Australia cruised to a 10-wicket win over the UAE, chasing down a target of 88 in just three overs.—*PTI*

Goldberg appointed as Soorma Hockey Club head coach

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

Olympian Philippe Goldberg of Belgium has been appointed as head coach of Soorma Hockey Club ahead of the second season of Hockey India League, the club said on Friday. Joining Goldberg in the revamped coaching setup is Olympian Ignacio Ricardo Bergner of Argentina, who takes on the role of Analytical Coach. The club's current Head Coach, Jeroen Baart, will transition into an advisory role, continuing to contribute to team strategy and technical planning throughout the season. "Joining Soorma Hockey Club is an exciting opportunity to contribute to India's evolving hockey landscape," Goldberg said in a release. "The team has laid a strong foundation, and my goal is to enhance performance. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

De Kock revives international career with a 100

FAISALABAD, 7 NOV

Quinton de Kock revived his international career with a fluent 22nd ODI century as South Africa hammered Pakistan by eight wickets in the second match and leveled the series 1-1. The left-handed de Kock, who reversed his 2023 ODI retirement before the white-ball series in Pakistan, smashed an unbeaten 123 off 119 balls in the Proteas' chase of 270-2 in 40.1 overs. Fast bowler Nandre Burger (4-46) and leg-spinner Nqabayomzi Peter (3-55), the two changes South Africa made from its narrow loss in the first ODI, had picked up career-best figures to restrict Pakistan to 269-9 after South Africa lost its seventh consecutive toss on the tour.—*PTI*

Final T20I: India target batting consistency

Australia will look to counter India's spin challenge

BRISBANE, 7 NOV

On the cusp of another overseas series win, India will look to overcome batting inconsistencies and finish the tour of Australia with authority when the two sides clash in the fifth and final T20 International here on Saturday.

With an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series, India have extended their 17-year streak of not losing a T20I series against Australia, and Suryakumar Yadav and Co. will look to finish strongly in this one too.

The focus will be on Shubman Gill and skipper Suryakumar Yadav's batting, while Australia will look to counter India's spin challenge when the two sides clash for the last time ahead of next year's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka.

India showed better tactical awareness in the previous match, adjusting to a tricky Carrara pitch.

Gill led the way in a promising start of 121 for 2 in 14 overs before a late collapse saw them lose four wickets for 15 runs.

For vice-captain Gill, it has been seven innings without a fifty, though his 46 in the fourth T20 was a sign of his returning form.

Gill has not quite displayed the fluent touch that has defined his batting in recent years.

He looked composed in the last match before being undone by a slower ball.

The opener will be eager to sign off on a high note and ease concerns within the team management. —*PTI*

India openers Abhishek Sharma, and Shubman Gill during the fourth T20 against Australia at the Carrara Stadium in Gold Coast. PHOTO: PTI

INDIA VS AUSTRALIA

INDIA vs AUSTRALIA Match starts at 1.45 pm IST

HEAD TO HEAD AT BRISBANE

PLAYED:	35
INDIA Won:	21
AUS Won:	12
No Result	2

I have learnt from past mistakes, says Axar Patel

Indian all-rounder Axar Patel says he has learnt from his "past mistake" of letting the size of boundaries dictate his shot-selection, something that was evident from the manner in which he targeted the more distant sides during the fourth T20I against Australia here. Axar's 11-ball 21, laced with a four and a six in the last over off Marcus Stoinis, was crucial to India breaching the 160-mark and posting 167, which Australia fell short by 48 runs. The visitors now have an unassailable 2-1 lead in the five-match series after the first game was washed out. "Obviously, I knew it was tough because wickets were falling

CHESS WORLD CUP

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi with his Uzbek counterpart, Shamsiddin Vokhidov PHOTO: X/@FIDECHESS

Erigaisi draws first blood against Vokhidov; Gukesh held

PANJIM, 7 NOV

Grandmaster Arjun Erigaisi continued with his fine form to beat his Uzbek counterpart Shamsiddin Vokhidov in a clean attacking game, while world champion D Gukesh played out a draw with Frederik Svane of Germany in the first game of the third round of the Chess World Cup, here on Friday.

Apart from Erigaisi, Grandmaster P Harikrishna also shot into the lead with another finely-crafted victory at the expense of young GM Daniel Dardha of Belgium.

With both Erigaisi and Harikrishna winning with white pieces, a draw would be enough for them to get over the line to the fourth round.

In the round of 64, R Praggnanandhaa also drew the first game with Robert Hovhannisyan of Armenia to start easy with black pieces, while Vidit Gujrathi played out a draw with Sam Shankland to start his campaign for the fourth round.

Erigaisi was great for the third time running, scoring his third straight win in the knockout event. Playing white, it was a Queen-pawn opening wherein Erigaisi found some nice resources in the opening and crushed Vokhidov in a one-sided affair. Harikrishna continued his success story with the seasoned Grandmaster, who famously assisted Gukesh in the World Championship title match, showcasing his skills as a brilliant attacker.

Available results (Round 3, Game 1) (Indians unless specified): Svane Frederic (Ger) drew with D Gukesh; Daniel Dardha (Bel) lost to P Harikrishna; Robert Hovhannisyan (Arm) drew with R Praggnanandhaa; Sam Shankland (USA) drew with Vidit Gujrathi; Shamsiddin Vokhidov (Uzb) lost to Arjun Erigaisi. —*PTI*

Indian Hockey celebrates centenary with Olympic legends

NEW DELHI, 7 NOV

The iconic Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium came alive on Friday as Indian hockey celebrated 100 glorious years with legends of the sport, including Olympic gold medallists Gurbux Singh and Aslam Sher Khan, gracing the historic occasion.

Hockey India felicitated some of the game's most celebrated icons in recognition of their lasting contributions to the sport and for the inspiration they provided to generations of players. Those honoured at the ceremony included Gurbux, Aslam, Harbinder Singh, Ajith Pal Singh, Ashok Kumar, B P Govinda, Zafar Iqbal, Brigadier Harcharan Singh, Vineet Kumar, Mir Ranjan Negi, Romeo James, Asunta Lakra, and Subhadra Pradhan. Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya, who attended the event alongside Union Minister Kiren Rijiju and Tamil Nadu Deputy Chief Minister Thiru Udhayanidhi Stalin, lauded the sport's illustrious journey and its deep-rooted connection with India's sporting pride. —*PTI*

Chhetri announces int'l retirement

KOLKATA, 7 NOV

Sunil Chhetri announced that his India career has come to an end after the Blue Tigers' exit from the final round of qualifiers for the AFC Asian Cup 2027. Chhetri announced this decision on Friday.

Chhetri had initially announced his retirement in June 2024 after a farewell match at Kolkata's Salt Lake Stadium.

However, he came out of retirement when the then-India head coach Manolo Marquez requested him to make himself available for India's matches for the Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers.

The 41-year-old is India's highest-ever goalscorer with 95 goals in 157 appearances.

Chhetri is still active in club football, with him recently signing a new contract with Bengaluru FC. —*PTI*

Sunil Chhetri PHOTO: PTI

INDIA A VS SOUTH AFRICA A

Prasidh and Siraj star as Ackerman ton keeps SA in fight

BENGALURU, 7 NOV

Fast bowlers produced an excellent effort as India A made light of Marques Ackerman's masterly hundred to nose ahead of South Africa A on the second day of the second four-day match here on Friday.

Prasidh Krishna (3/35), Mohammad Siraj (2/61), and Akash Deep (2/28) used the pace and carry on the BCCI Centre of Excellence pitch to good effect to share seven wickets among them, bowling out SA for 221 in their first innings.

Ackerman's 134 (118b, 17x4, 5x6) was the glue that held the SA innings together.

After securing a 34-run lead, India A were placed at 78 for three in their second innings, for an overall lead of 112 runs. KL Rahul (26) and Kuldeep Yadav (0) were batting at stumps. Abhimanyu Easwaran made the future path all the more tough with his second duck of the match, while Sai Sudharsan concluded his lukewarm preparation for the South Africa Test series with an underwhelming 23 off 38 balls.

SOUTH AFRICA'S MARQUES ACKERMAN PHOTO: PTI

Devdutt Padikkal (24) was batting steadily, but an outstanding catch at gully by Lesego Senokwane brought a disappointing end to his tenure.

Senokwane had little clue about an Akash delivery that moved a wee bit away to uproot his off-stump.

India A 255 and 78 for 3 (Rahul 26*, Padikkal 24, Cele 2-28) lead South Africa A 221 (Ackerman 134, Prasidh 3-35, Akash Deep 2-28, Siraj 2-61) by 112 runs —PTI

Vani's hat-trick of birdies gets her 5th title

JAIPUR, 7 NOV

Vani Kapoor sank three birdies in the last three holes to clinch the 14th Leg of the Women's Pro Golf Tour, edging out Jasmine Shekar in the closely-fought third and final round, here Friday.

Vani's three closing birdies gave her a round of 2-under 68 for the third day in a row. It gave her a three-day total of 6-under 204, as Jasmine Shekar (68), despite closing with a birdie, fell one stroke short.

It was Vani's fifth win of the season as she maintains her lead at the top of the Hero Order of Merit.

Sneha Singh (69) finished third at 2-under 208, while Amandeep Drall (70) was fourth at even par 210.

Vani, starting the final day with a one-shot lead, saw that lead go away on the very first hole as Jasmine opened the day with a birdie. Jasmine fell back again as she dropped a bogey on the next.

However, with Vani dropping back-to-back bogeys on the third and the fourth, Jasmine was back on level terms despite a second bogey on the third.

The tight battle continued as Vani birdied Par-3 sixth to go one ahead, but once again Jasmine caught up with a birdie on the ninth.

On the back nine, Jasmine birdied the 11th to go ahead while Vani's run of pars continued from the seventh to the 15th. —*PTI*

Vani Kapoor PHOTO: PTI

NAQVI SHOWS UP FOR ICC MEET; BCCI TO RAISE ASIA CUP ISSUE

DUBAI, 7 NOV

The 'will he or won't he' puzzle was finally resolved as Mohsin Naqvi arrived at the ICC headquarters in Dubai on Friday (November 7) afternoon. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman had been a doubtful attendee for the ICC meetings, given his recent record, but he is now understood to be attending the ICC Board meeting.

Naqvi has been staying away from ICC meetings recently, including the annual conference held in July in Singapore. So there was always some doubt over his attendance this time too, especially with a serious matter - the unresolved issue of the Asia Cup - scheduled to be discussed.

The PCB chief - under fire for retaining possession of the Asia Cup Trophy that rightfully belongs to India - showed up for the ICC meeting at the last minute on Friday afternoon, where a discussion on the unresolved issue is believed to be underway at the time of publishing. —*PTI*

MCA seeks land allotment for women's cricket academy

MUMBAI, 7 NOV

The Mumbai Cricket Association has requested the Maharashtra government to allot a suitable plot of land in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region for the establishment of a residential women's cricket academy. MCA president Ajinkya Naik submitted a formal letter in this regard to the state Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday.

The development comes in the wake of India's triumphant campaign in the Women's ODI World Cup.

"Over the years, MCA has taken several initiatives to nurture young talent and provide state-of-the-art infrastructure to cricketers from Mumbai and adjoining areas," the MCA wrote in its letter.

"In line with our commitment to the growth of women's cricket, we are keen to establish a dedicated Residential Women's Cricket Academy within the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR)."

"The academy will serve as a centre of excellence providing comprehensive facilities including turf grounds, indoor practice areas, residential accommodation, gymnasium, physiotherapy and sports medicine support, and classrooms for academic and life-skill development," it added. —*PTI*

WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

Bellingham and Foden back in England squad

LONDON, 7 NOV

Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden were recalled Friday by England coach Thomas Tuchel for the team's upcoming World Cup qualifiers against Serbia and Albania. The attacking midfielders two of the country's most talented players were left out of England's last squad, with Tuchel stressing the need to have a strong team spirit in the camp and warning there would be "no guarantees" for his superstar players.Bellingham has started all five of Real Madrid's games since the last international break, scoring in three of them, and looks to be fully recovered after missing the start of the season because of shoulder surgery. Foden is back to his best form with Manchester City, too, scoring twice against Borussia Dortmund in the Champions League on Wednesday.

Jude Bellingham and Phil Foden PHOTO: PTI

There was a first call-up for Bournemouth midfielder Alex Scott, while there was no place for Madrid right back Trent-Arnold. England has already qualified for the World Cup after guaranteeing first place in its group with six wins out of six.

Aston Villa beat Maccabi Tel Aviv 2-0

Aston Villa beat Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv 2-0 in a Europa League game played amid heightened security measures, with more than 700 police officers deployed to deal with possible protests.

Morgan Rogers put through Ian Maatsen in first-half stoppage time for the defender to score from a tight angle, and Villa doubled the lead on the hour with Donyell Malen hitting the bottom corner from the penalty spot.

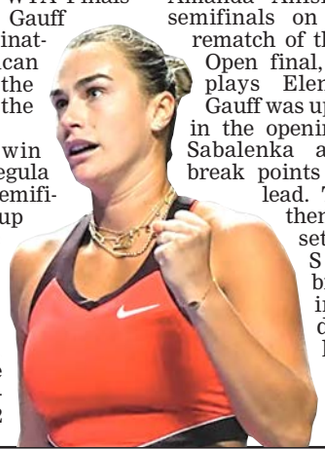
It was Villa's third win from games in the competition. —*PTI*

Aryna eliminates Gauff to reach last 4 at WTA Finals

RIYADH, 7 NOV

Top-ranked Aryna Sabalenka earned a third straight group-stage win at the WTA Finals by beating Coco Gauff 7-6 (5), 6-2, eliminating her American opponent from the tournament in the process.

Sabalenka's win means Jessica Pegula advanced to the semifinals from the group along with the Belarusian No. 1. Pegula beat Jasmine Paolini 6-2, 6-3 earlier to take her record to 2-1. Gauff, the defending champion, finished 1-2 while Paolini went 0-3 at the season-ending tournament for the world's top eight players.



Sabalenka will take on Amanda Anisimova in the semifinals on Friday in a rematch of this year's U.S. Open final, while Pegula plays Elena Rybakina. Gauff was up a break twice in the opening set against Sabalenka and had two break points to take a 5-2 lead. The American then served for the set at 5-4, but Sabalenka broke by chasing down a drop shot and hitting a forehand winner down the line. —*PTI*